

3d artist

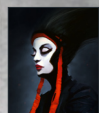
Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
Issue 069 September 2011



Interview
Greg Broadmore



Articles
Sketchbook of Freeuno



The Gallery
Dominus, Serge Birault
and Li Biao, plus more!

BARBARIC WARRIOR

Prepare yourself for battle as Jon McCoy shows us how to paint this fearsome brute in our Tribal Warriors series

Designing Your Own Worlds

David Smit shows us how to turn an idea into a fascinating project using his imaginary hippie world as an example.

Character Portrayal

In the third chapter of our brilliant Character Portrayal series, **Richard Tilbury** covers how to paint an **Elderly Man**.

Matte Painting

Piotrek Swigut continues to develop his epic scene by showing us how to add believable lighting to a matte painting.





Editorial

If I am honest I think the August issue was one of my favorite issues of 2DArtist magazine in my year and a half at 3DTotal, so this month's issue has got a lot to live up to. Fortunately for all of us our freelance artists haven't let us down and have yet again provided a jaw-dropping collection of stunning tutorials.

To get the ball rolling this month I am going to talk about this issue's interview. The main reason for starting by talking about this is because this is hands-down the most fun interview I've ever done. How do you interview someone who has been interviewed hundreds of times and has been asked every question under the sun? Well, you ask strange questions and get strange answers. Weta artist and Dr.Grordbort's creator **Greg Broadmore** will have you splitting your sides as he tells us about his love for dinosaurs, and some of the work he has done on some of the best films of the last few years.

We will move from an out-of-the-ordinary interview to a sketchbook that could be described in a similar way. The artist known only as **Freeuno** has shared some of his sketches for this month's sketchbook. He has a unique way of sketching as he basically starts with no idea of what he is going to draw, which throws up some interesting results.

This month's cover image comes courtesy of the fantastic artist **Jon McCoy**. Our Tribal Warriors series has been great and this installment is no exception. Jon does a great job of telling us how to use well-documented information to create designs, as well as showing us how to bring those designs to life in our illustrations.

Richard Tilbury continues our character portrayal series this month by talking us through painting the characteristics of an elderly man. Rich works just across the room from me and we are all very familiar with how he looks, which made us all laugh when we saw Rich's image as it looks remarkably like himself!

Matte painting is a real skill and **Piotrek Swigut** has been doing a great job of explaining it for us. In his latest installment he will be talking us through making the lighting in our scene consistent.

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"The Trials of Devotion"

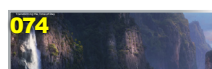
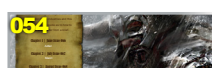
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"Nizari"

Digital Art Masters: Volume 5 – Free Chapter

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We finished our outstanding Pin-Up series last month so I am sure you are all wondering what gem of a series we have lined up for you this month. Many of you will be familiar with **David Smit**, who has done some great work for us in the past. You may even be familiar with his amazing set of illustrations based on the Hippie-Pippie-Pocalypse. In this new series David will be talking about how to design and create your own worlds, using his great imaginary world as an example.

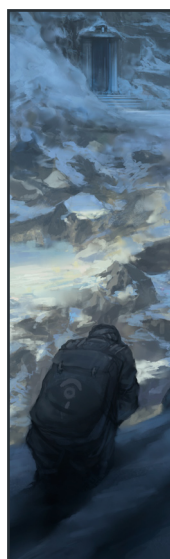
This month's Making Of covers the handiwork of **Noah Bradley**, who talks us through how he painted his fantastic image "The Trials of Devotion".

This month's gallery is also full of stunning work by the likes of **Ioan Dumitrescu**, **Serge Birault** and **Jaime Martínez**.

Contributing Artists

Every month many artists from around the world contribute to **3DCreative** and **2DArtist** magazines. Here you can find out a bit more about them!

If you would like to be a part of **3DCreative** or **2DArtist** magazine, please contact: simon@3dtotal.com



Noah Bradley

Noah Bradley is an environment concept artist and illustrator. He only recently graduated from art school, but is already making a name for himself in the industry. His clients include Wizards of the Coast, FFG, and AEG. His work was accepted into *Expose* and *Spectrum* this year.



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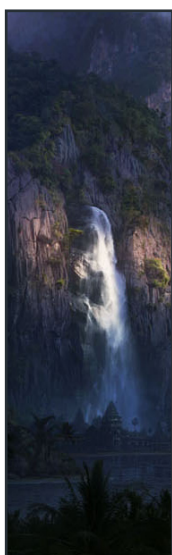


Piotrek Swigut

Piotrek Swigut is a concept artist and matte painter from Poland specializing in work for film and video games.

Soon after graduating he was spotted by Blizzard Entertainment where he had the opportunity to create cinematics for *World of Warcraft*, *Starcraft* and *Diablo*. He recently left Blizzard to work on the new *Conan the Barbarian* (2011) movie.

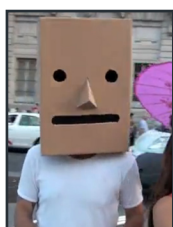
<http://www.swigut.com/>
pswigut@gmail.com



Richard Tilbury

Richard Tilbury has had a passion for drawing since being a couple of feet tall. He studied Fine Art and was eventually led into the realm of computers several years ago. His brushes have been dissolving in white spirit since the late nineties and his graphics tablet has become their successor. Richard still sketches regularly and now balances his time between 2D and 3D, although drawing will always be closest to his heart.

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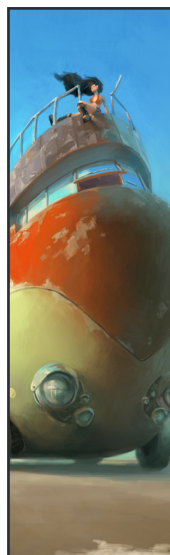


Freeuno

Freeuno likes to draw almost automatically without thinking about it too much. When the work is finished he looks back at his work looking for meaning.

He doesn't like monotony, which is why he spends some days digital painting, but also tries different techniques such as graffiti.

<http://www.freeuno.blogspot.com/>
twocapsworks@hotmail.com



David Smit

When not traveling or working overseas, David resides in Amsterdam, freelancing in concept art, illustration and art direction jobs. It's only when he sleeps that he's not busy! He is always on the search for great projects, opportunities, stories, good music, and a nice cold beer.

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Image Courtesy of Nicolas Garilhe "God of Writing"

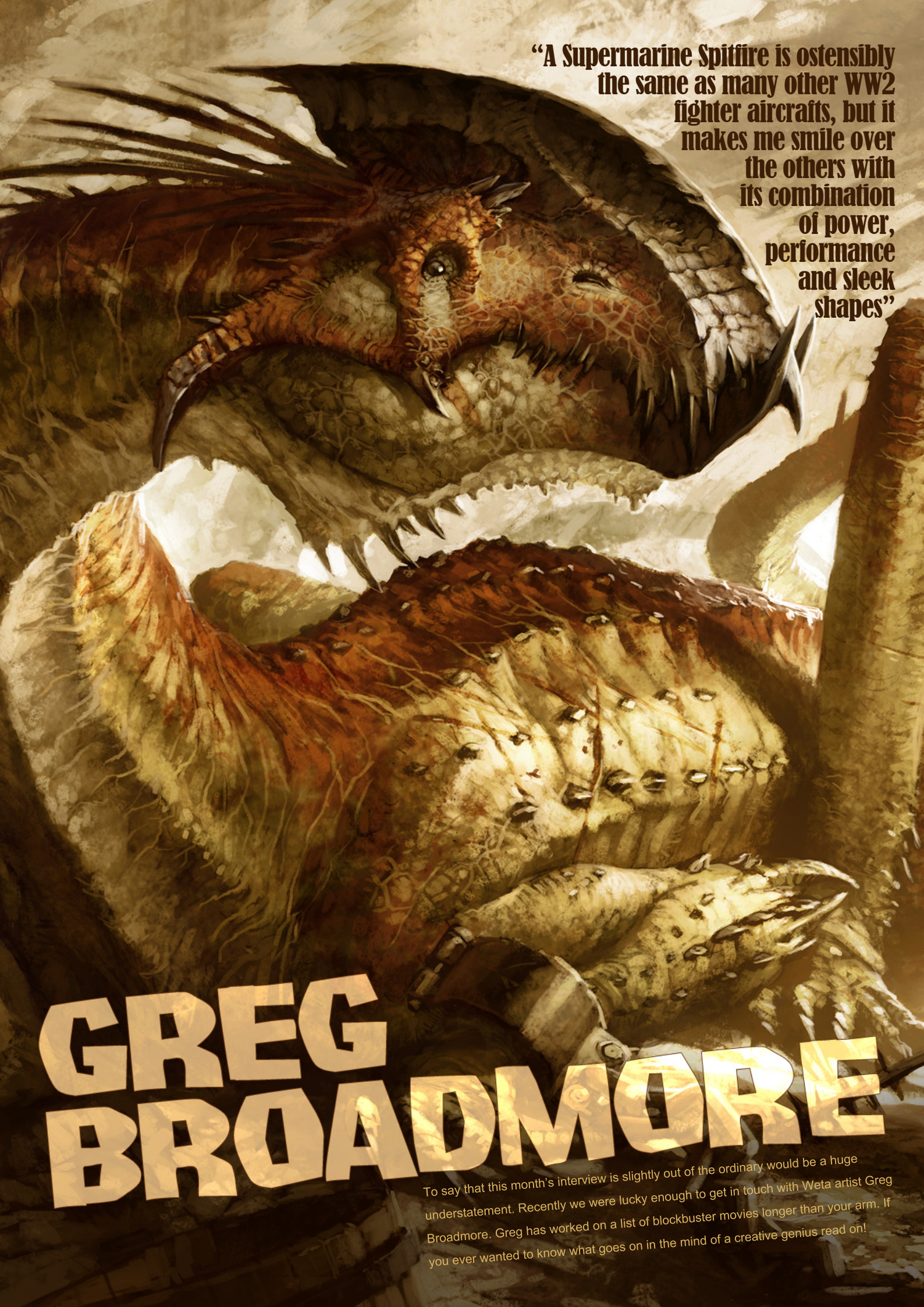
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“A Supermarine Spitfire is ostensibly the same as many other WW2 fighter aircrafts, but it makes me smile over the others with its combination of power, performance and sleek shapes”

GREG BROADMORE

To say that this month's interview is slightly out of the ordinary would be a huge understatement. Recently we were lucky enough to get in touch with Weta artist Greg Broadmore. Greg has worked on a list of blockbuster movies longer than your arm. If you ever wanted to know what goes on in the mind of a creative genius read on!



© Greg Broadmore

Hi Greg. I have done quite a few interviews in the past, but I think this is the one I've been most nervous about. You told me recently that you've been interviewed quite a few times so it would be good if I could come up with some questions that were "out of the ordinary" so here is my first attempt. You have worked on some of the biggest blockbusters of the last 10 years and have established the fantastic Dr. Grordbort Raygun collection. With that in mind, why do you think they make scented toilet roll? That is a fantastic question and it seems an enigma on the surface. The answer however is actually very simple – idiots buy it. It is a borderline ridiculous idea. You're going to wipe the paper on your butt (the stinkiest part of your anatomy). This paper will come into contact with the smelliest, grossest thing your body can

produce, and yet, some people think a lightly scented paper balances this out. Mental!

I notice that you worked on *King Kong*, which I thought was visually outstanding. How much impact do you think it would have

had on the overall design of the film if King Kong was a giant woodlouse? Oh, and did you meet Jack Black?

Oh, very little impact on the design of the film. I think we did actually design a giant woodlouse at one point, but no-one had the brilliant idea of



© Greg Broadmore



making it the leading role. It would have given the whole Ann Darrow/King Kong relationship a new spin for sure.

And yes, I did meet Jack Black – he totally walked by my desk and totally said “Hi”. It was quite the moment.

I think that the woodlouse is a somewhat neglected creature throughout games and movies. If you were to turn a woodlouse into

the lead in a movie, what kind of movie do you think it would be and how would you tackle the lead character design?

If I had to work on a movie where the lead character was a woodlouse, I would tackle the challenge by turning to that trusted and age-old tool utilized by creative people all over the world: drugs. Lots of them, as often as possible. What sort of movie would it be? I have no clue as I haven't seen the screenplay, but I hope it's not porn.

I would guess from looking at your work that like me you are a dinosaur fan! If you could be any dinosaur which one would it be? And it can't be anything obvious like a T-Rex or Velociraptor. I would be a Gallimimus because I like saying it.

I can't be a Tyrannosaurus? Oh that's mean. I assume that I would be cheating to say Albertasaurus then? And you'd be a Gallimimus? A Gallimimus? That's just weird, my friend. Hm... Triceratops was my childhood



© Greg Broadmore

favorite... Troodon would be the clever one I guess, and I do live under the illusion that I am quite clever... This is hard! I'll have to get back to you.

I knew you were a dinosaur fan! I will ask you the same question as I would ask any appreciator of prehistoric reptiles. In the scene at the end of *Jurassic Park* there is a fight between two Velociraptor's and a T-Rex and it is implied that the T-Rex kicks butt!



© Greg Broadmore





Who do you think would have won if it was five Velociraptors verses a T-Rex?

Well this is a very serious question indeed and I will need to don my nerd hat to contemplate it.

Firstly, we should all know by now that the Velociraptors in *Jurassic Park* were nothing like real Velociraptors; the real ones are about the size of a small dog. So, assuming five dog-sized Velociraptors were starved and/ or brain damaged enough to want to fight an adult T-Rex, we can pretty safely assume, even given the current sway towards the thinking that the T-Rex was a scavenger, that those five mesozoic lizards got their cloaca's handed to them (nerd hat off again for a minute).

You have mastered the art of steampunk design, which I would guess gave birth to the amazing Raygun collection. If you could create a raygun or a machine to perform any mundane task what would that task be?



You can't say that it would be replying to interview questions.

Well, I find basic grooming and hygiene very boring, so I would very much like a steampunk automaton (you know the sort – brass, covered in rivets and with as many useless cogs stuck

all over it as possible) to scrub, scour and shave me from top to bottom each day. Not the face obviously - that looks mint already.

“I want designs to make sense and trigger all the bits of my brain that go ‘cooooooool’”

Sounds like a worthwhile invention, however I am not sure that you need to shave your entire body every day! When designing your gadgets and gizmos do you consider functionality or head straight down the “what looks cool route”?

What the fudge? Is this a real design question?! I am getting mighty indignant now and am doing a fair bit of huffing, a small measure of puffing and I even did a small harrumph to cap it off. Ok, why not. Function or form eh? The age old design question. Both is the answer and the honest truth. I want designs to make sense and trigger all the bits of my brain that go “coooooool”. The best real world designs do this. A Supermarine Spitfire is ostensibly the same as many other WW2 fighter aircrafts, but it makes me smile over the others with its combination of power, performance and sleek shapes. Film or game design works best for me when it tries to do the same.



Ok, this is a little bit of a serious question too. I have a theory that pretty much every artist (particularly digital ones) were exposed to some form of media at a young age that had a lasting impact on them. Is there anything that stands out to you as being particularly influential?

That is not a little serious, that is very serious (to

a nerd like me at least). What media influenced me? That's easy – video games. I grew up with them and can only just remember life before them. I remember very clearly how astounded and elated I was when I first saw them. As a kid I used to go to this holiday camp out on the East Cape of New Zealand and one year I went there were some mechanical games in a parlour at

the front. Basically a traditional looking upright arcade machine, but everything was rolling paper backdrops, back lit, with cardboard jets on wires. The joystick mechanically moved the jet and a loud clacker sounded the explosions. I loved it. The next year I came back, and they had *Pong* and *Breakout* (a few years after games had taken off in the US and Japan).





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© Greg Broadmore

It blew my mind. I knew I was witnessing the future and had a total geek breakdown and could think of nothing else for years.

I know you can't tell me anything about it, but have you done any work on *The Hobbit*?

Just a tiny bit. I am full-time on Dr. Grordbort's and doing my next book right now. I actually try and stay away from film work these days. I loved it, and may do it again if the right project comes along, but I feel like I've done my dash with other people's projects for now.

I can honestly say that I am one of the few lucky people that really enjoys his job. I get the impression from you that may fit into this category as well. What are your top three favorite things about being a concept artist?

Good on you, me too! We are privileged, that is for sure. The three best things about being paid to draw robots and monsters are:

- I get to watch and learn from others who approach design in ways I would never guess
- I get to interact and learn from some of the world's great storytellers
- I get paid to draw robots and monsters

It has been nothing short of a pleasure speaking to you. Thanks for letting me ask some interesting questions, and for letting me quiz you on pivotal subjects such as loo roll, dinosaurs and woodlice.

Greg Broadmore

For more information please visit:

<http://gregbroadmore.blogspot.com/>
www.DrGrordborts.com

Or contact him at:

greg_broadmore@hotmail.com

Interview by: Simon Morse

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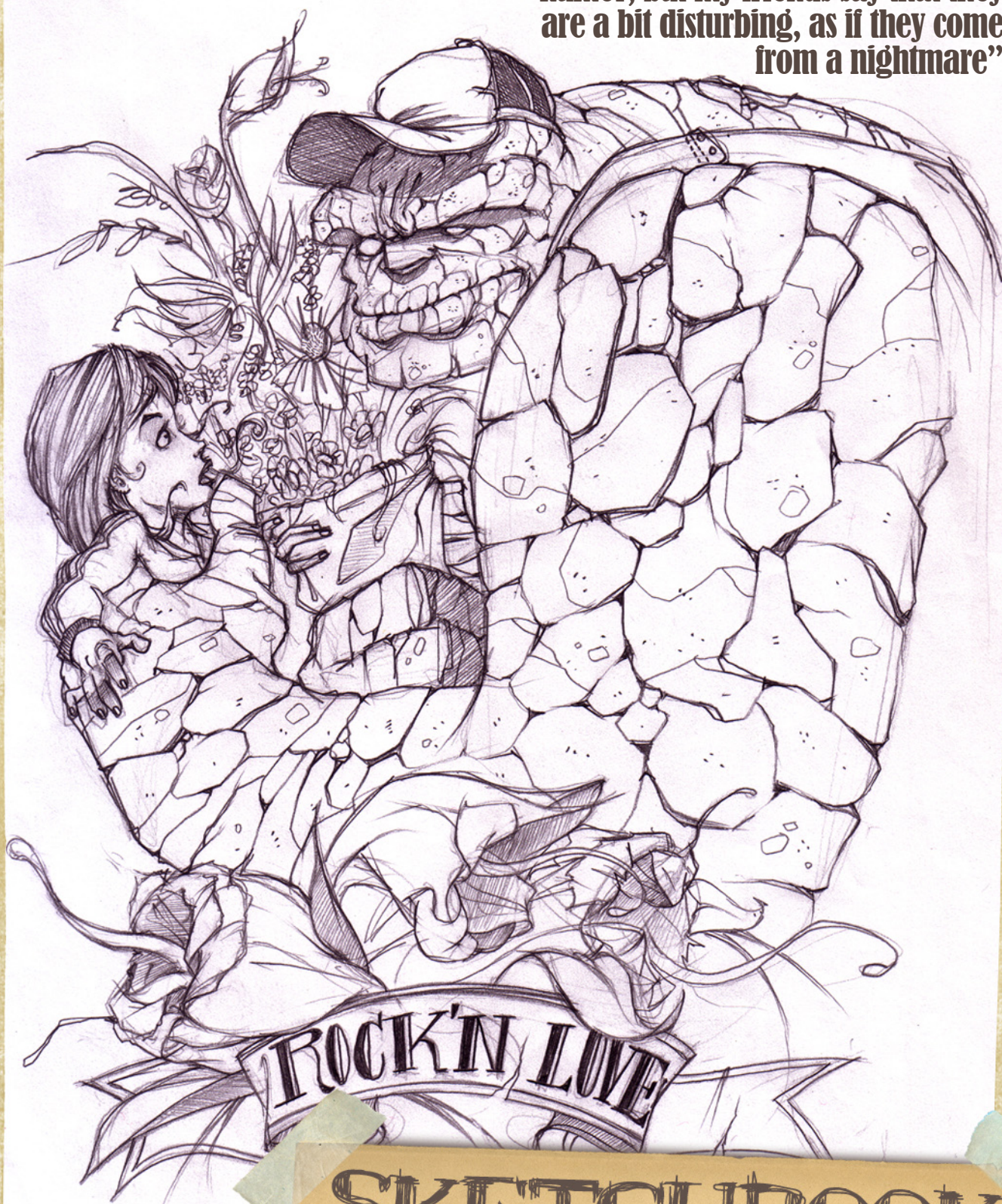
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"Sometimes I enjoy creating impossible characters, with a touch of humor, but my friends say that they are a bit disturbing, as if they come from a nightmare"

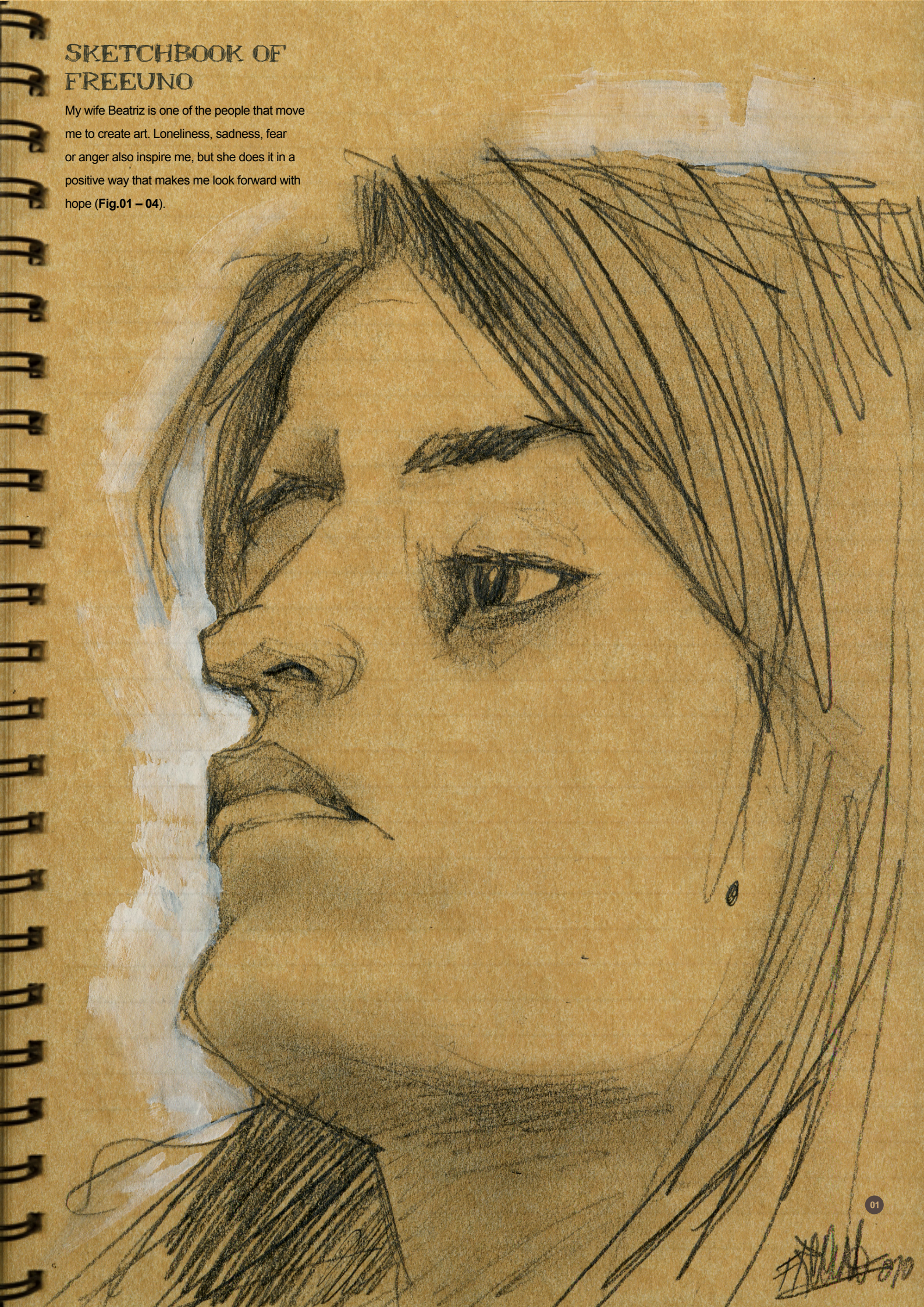


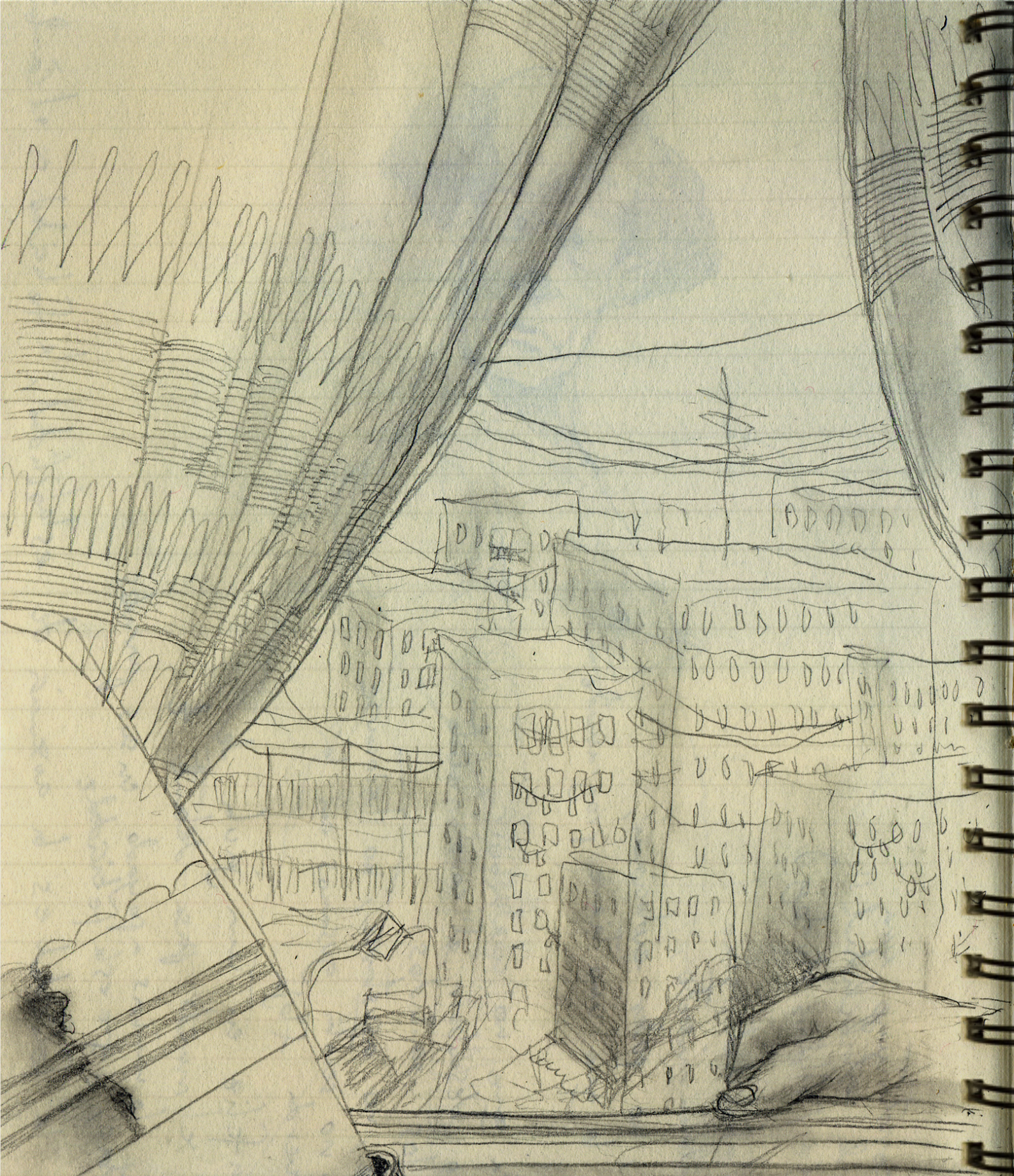
SKETCHBOOK OF FREEUNO

This month's sketchbook artist goes by the name of Freeuno. I have heard it said many times before that an artist's sketchbook reveals what is going on in his mind. If this is the case Freeuno's mind must be a fascinating and quirky place.

SKETCHBOOK OF FREEUNO

My wife Beatriz is one of the people that move me to create art. Loneliness, sadness, fear or anger also inspire me, but she does it in a positive way that makes me look forward with hope (Fig.01 – 04).

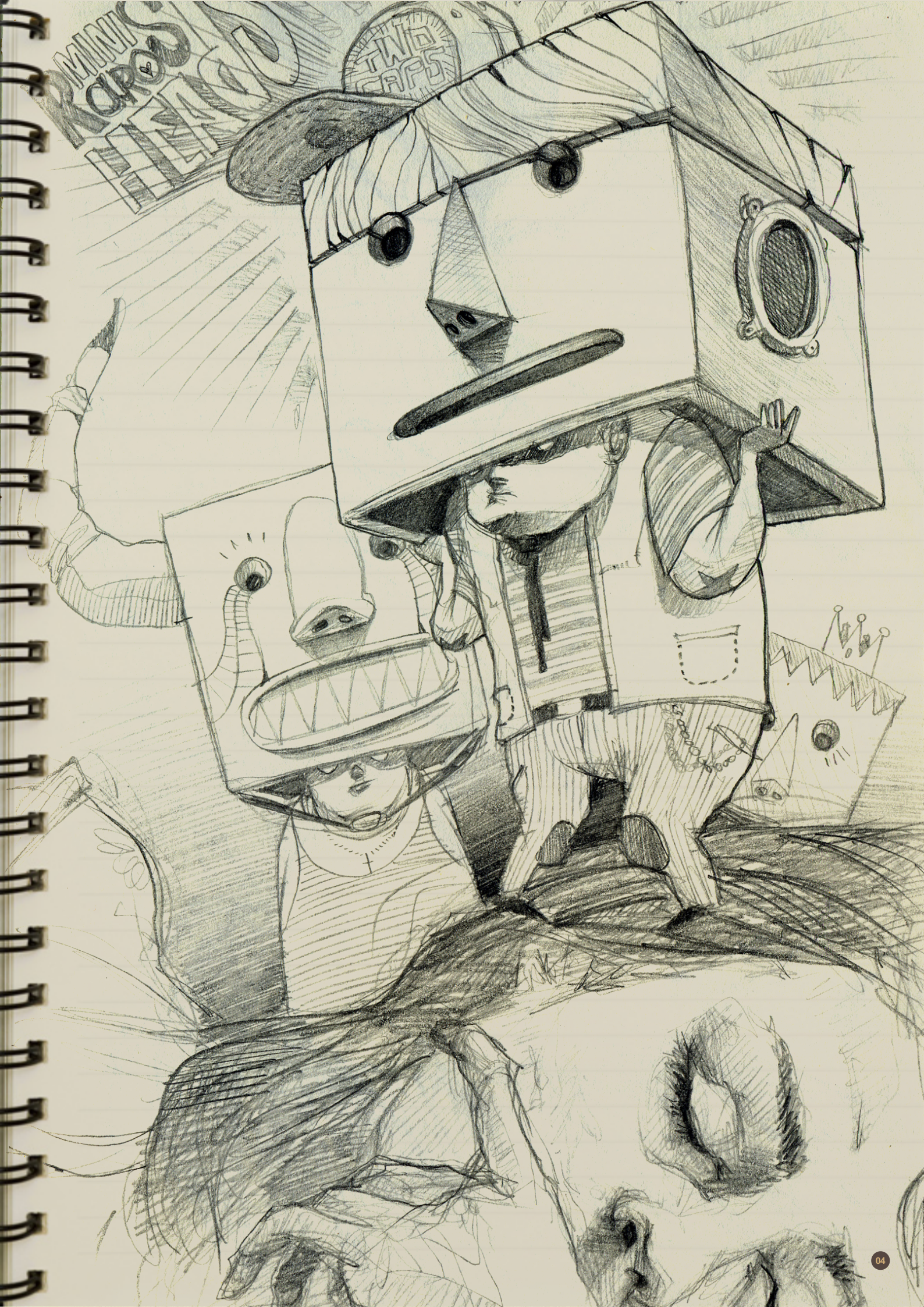




La Emperatriz
de Lucero







En un lugar de
 torijos de cuyo
 nombre no
 quiero
 acordarme...

One of my other sources of inspiration is very petite. Her height is less than that of an average human, closer to that of an elf. Although she is only two years old she makes me smile every day and gives me the inspiration I need. Her name is Carmen and I have the luck to be her father (Fig.05 – 07).

... Doña Moniche
 de la Mancha.

Fig.05



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Fig.06
 +
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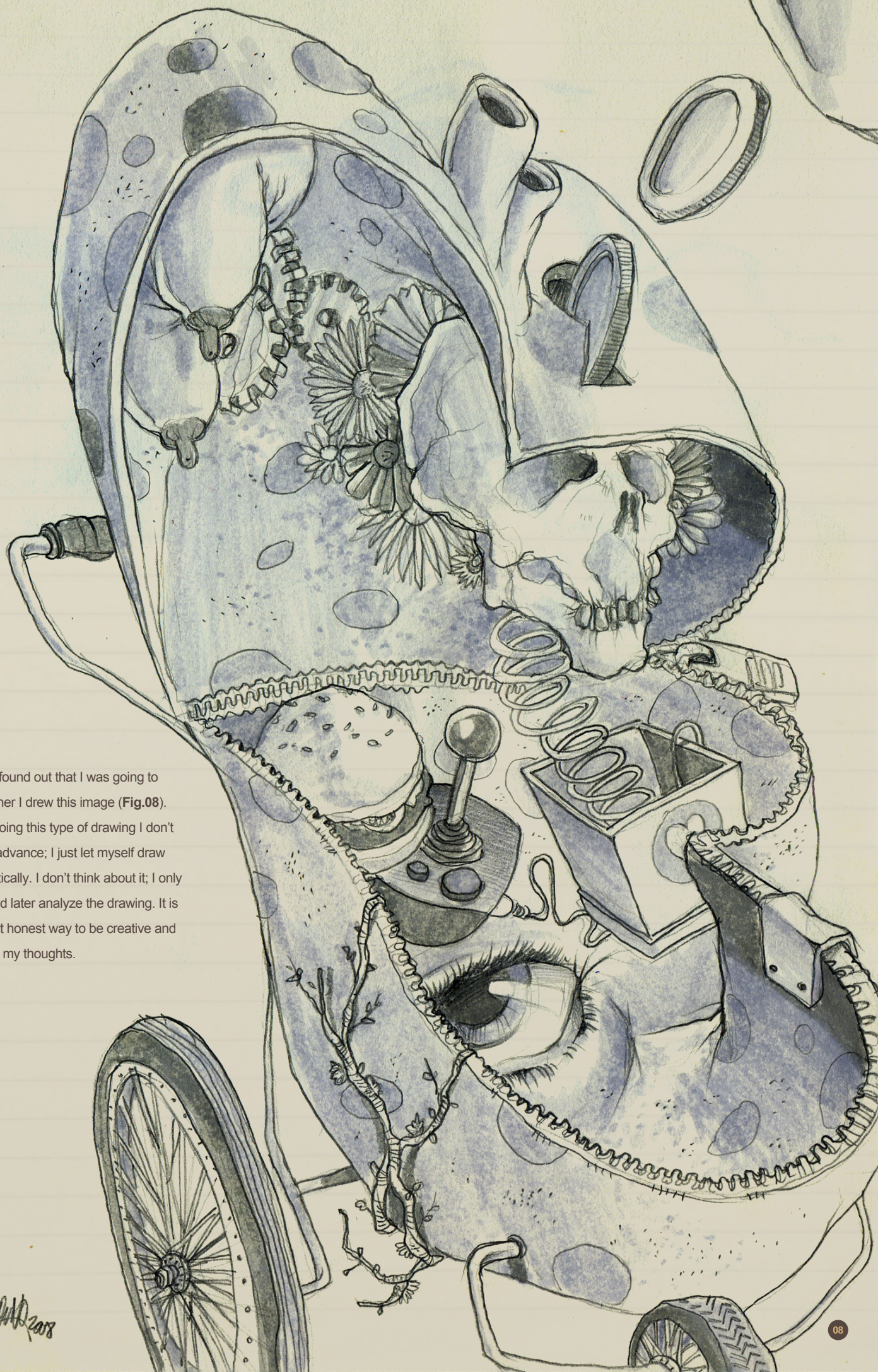
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Fig.07
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When I found out that I was going to be a father I drew this image (Fig.08). When doing this type of drawing I don't plan in advance; I just let myself draw automatically. I don't think about it; I only draw and later analyze the drawing. It is the most honest way to be creative and express my thoughts.

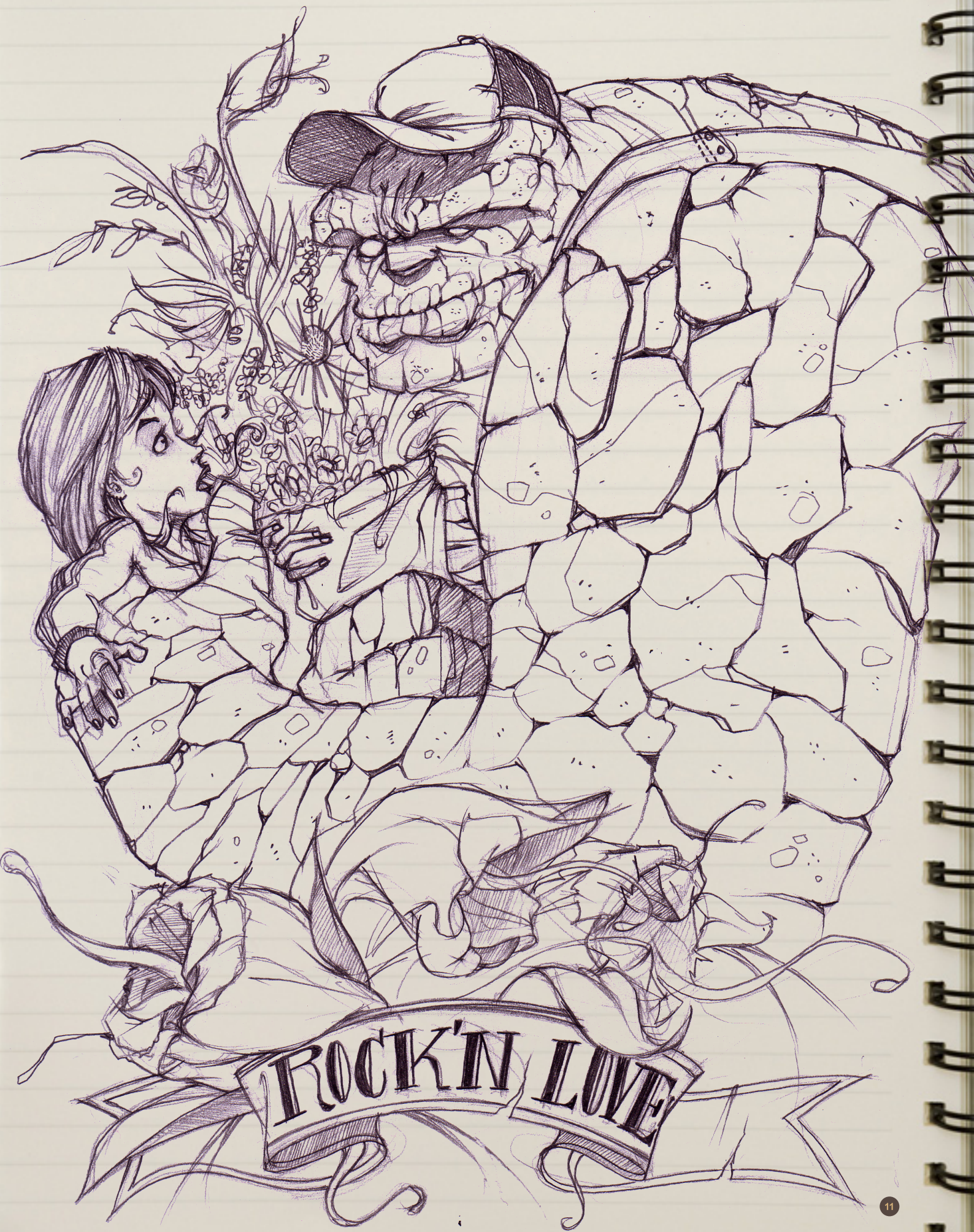


Superheroes have been with me and influenced me since I was a child. I've played with many techniques and I love discovering new styles, but my heroes and villains will be in my memories forever (Fig.09 – 12).





ROCK'N LOVE





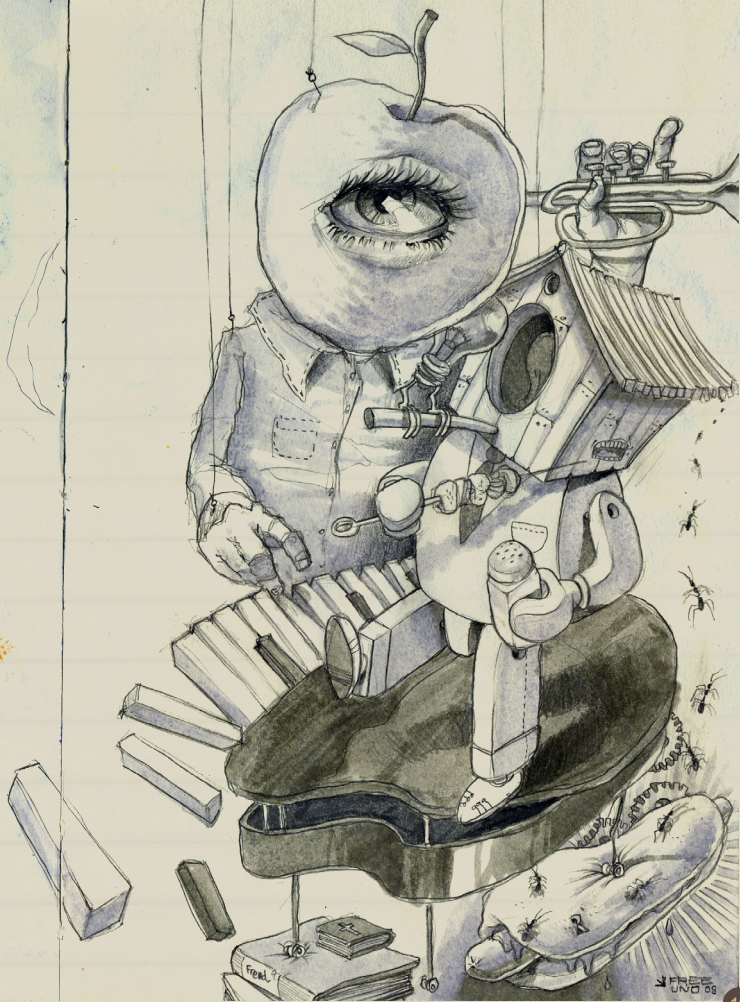
Music is an element that I cannot do without, in the creative process or any other time of day. That is why music often presents itself in some way in my creations.

I like listening to jazz and transfer the improvisation and freedom to the paper

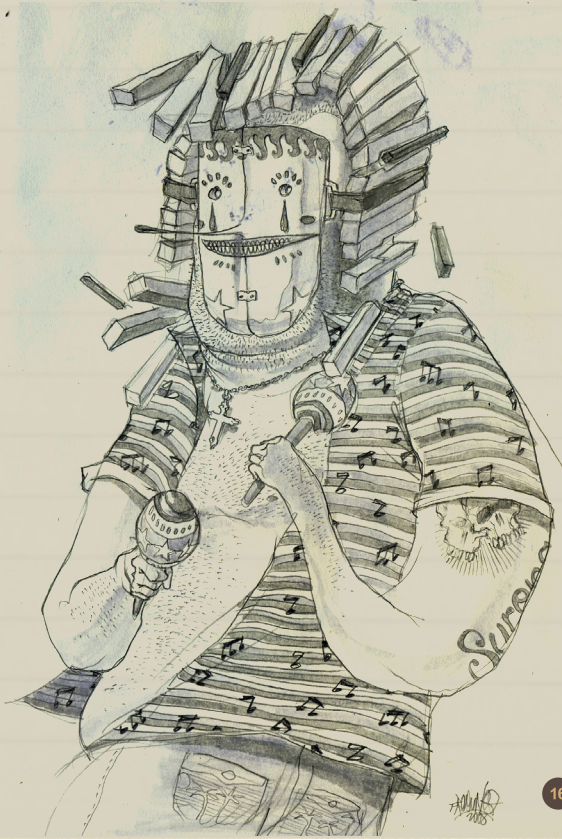
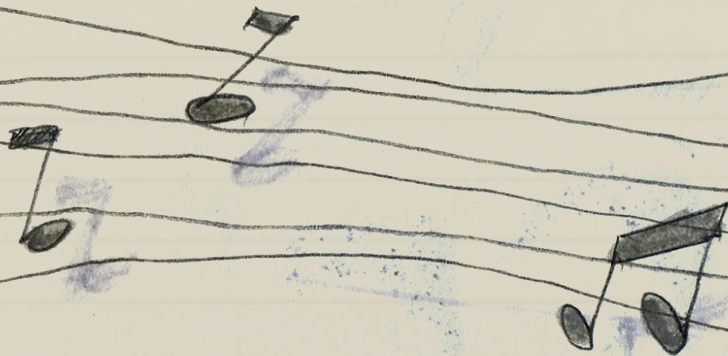
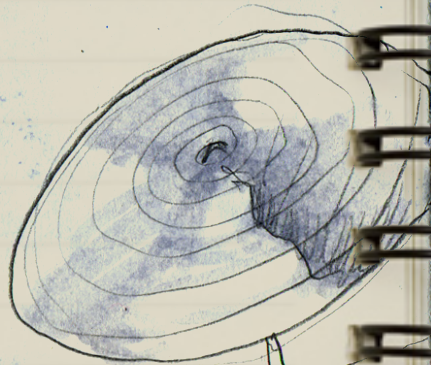
(Fig.13 – 17).







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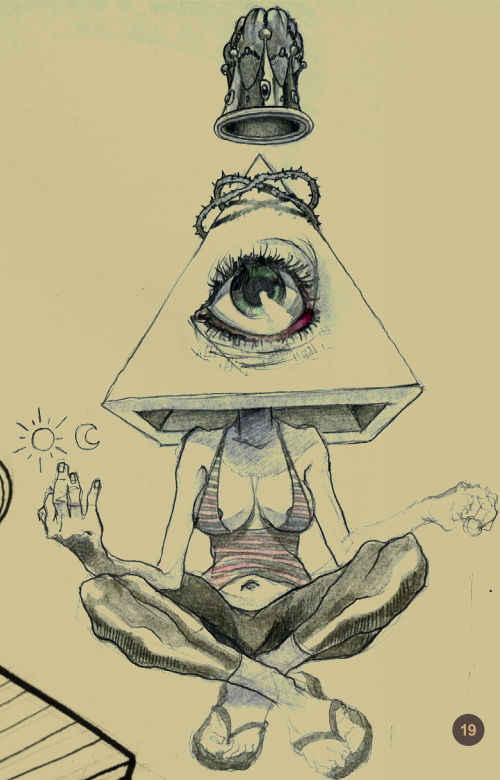
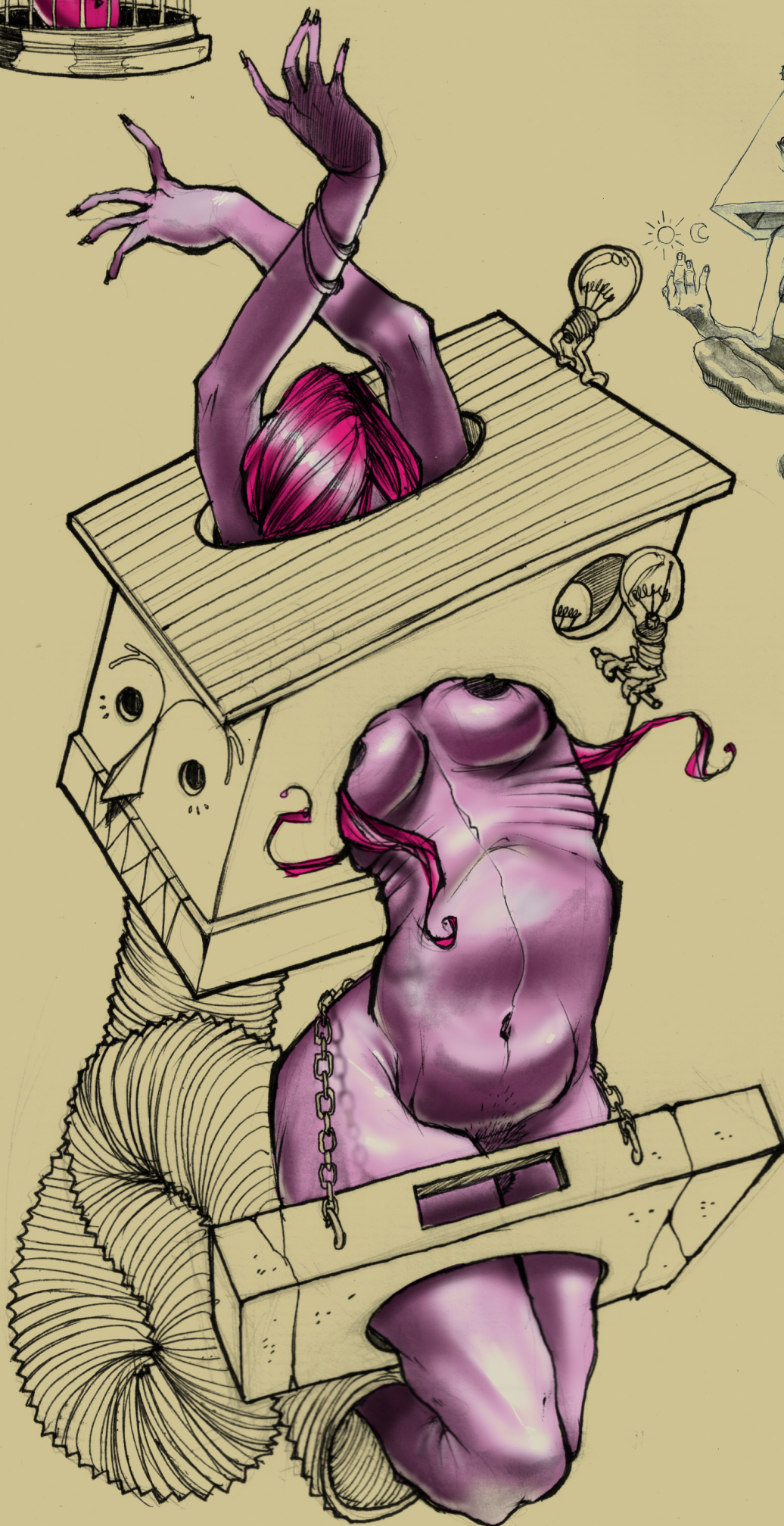
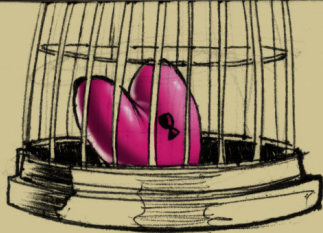
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HAGO OTRA COSA POR DIFENDERME LOS OTROS

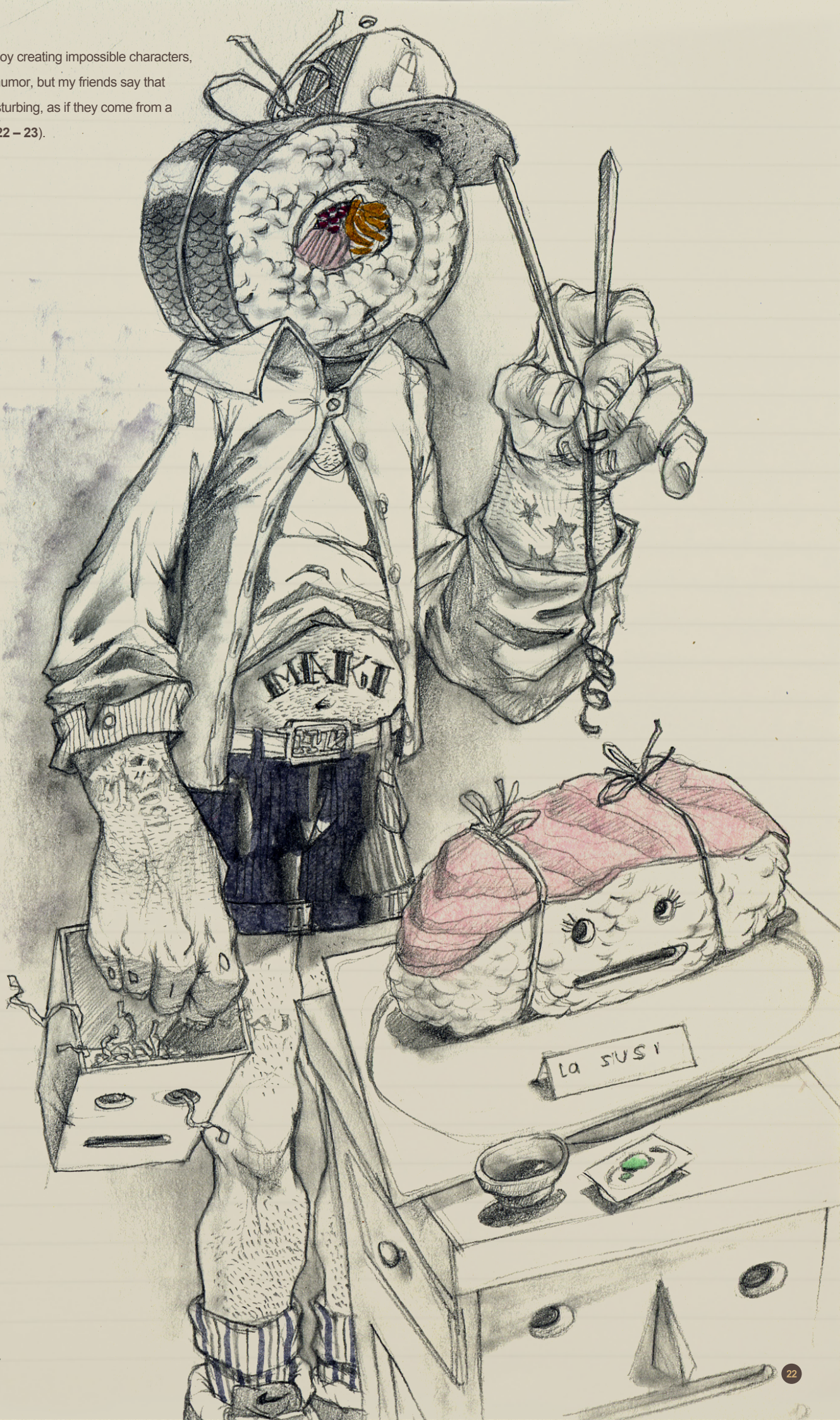
I spend a lot of my day wondering why we are in this world, thinking about the distant universe and the stuff of which we are composed. Love, good, evil, destiny – I like the mystical things that come with being a human (Fig.18 – 20).





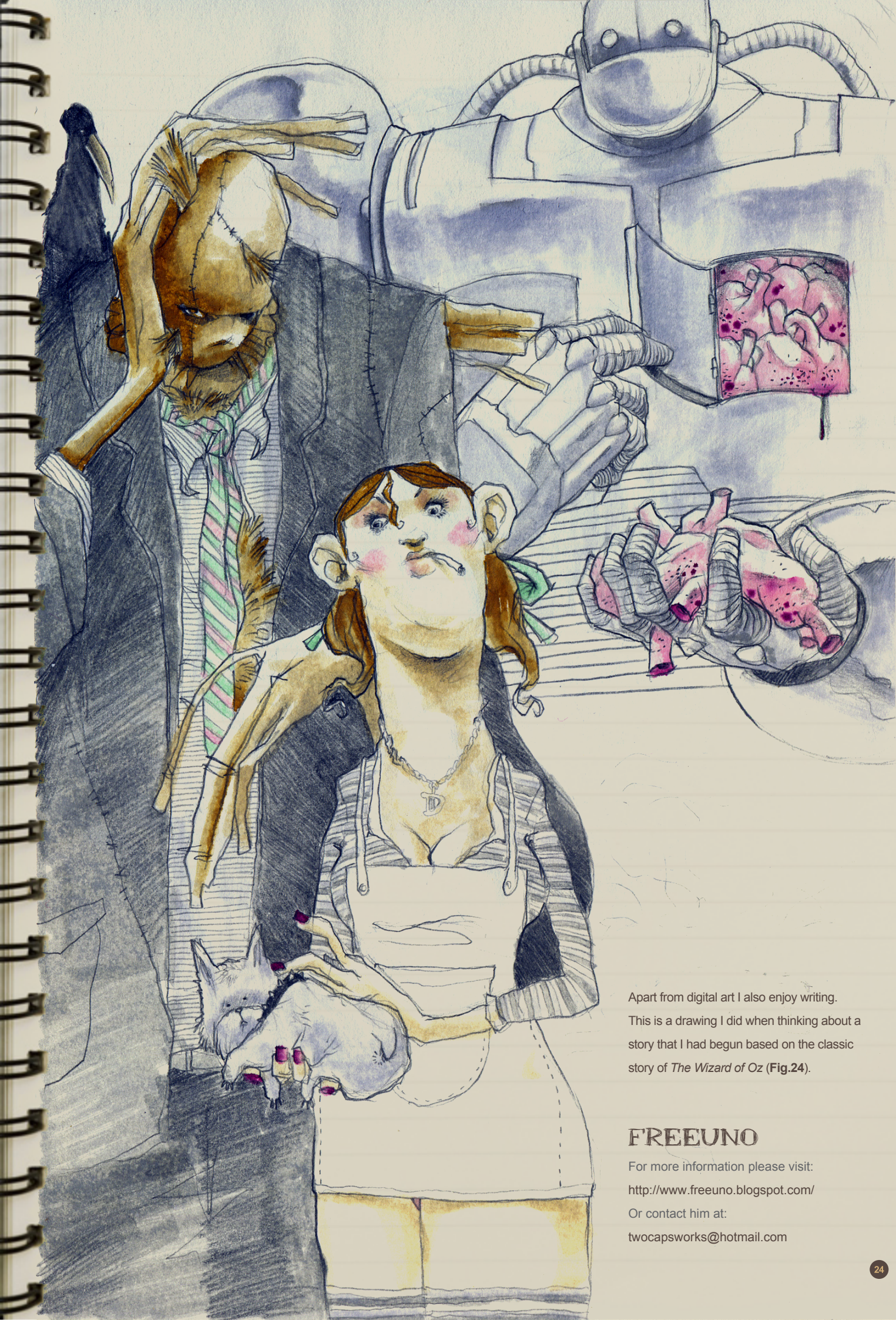
This is a portrait of my cousin (Fig.21). I like to portray people around me on calm days. I like to see their impatient faces as they wait for the image to be finished. There is a lot of charm that can be captured in a natural moment.

Sometimes I enjoy creating impossible characters,
with a touch of humor, but my friends say that
they are a bit disturbing, as if they come from a
nightmare (Fig.22 – 23).



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2010





Apart from digital art I also enjoy writing.
This is a drawing I did when thinking about a
story that I had begun based on the classic
story of *The Wizard of Oz* (Fig.24).

FREEUNO

For more information please visit:
<http://www.freeuno.blogspot.com/>
Or contact him at:
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Jaime Martínez

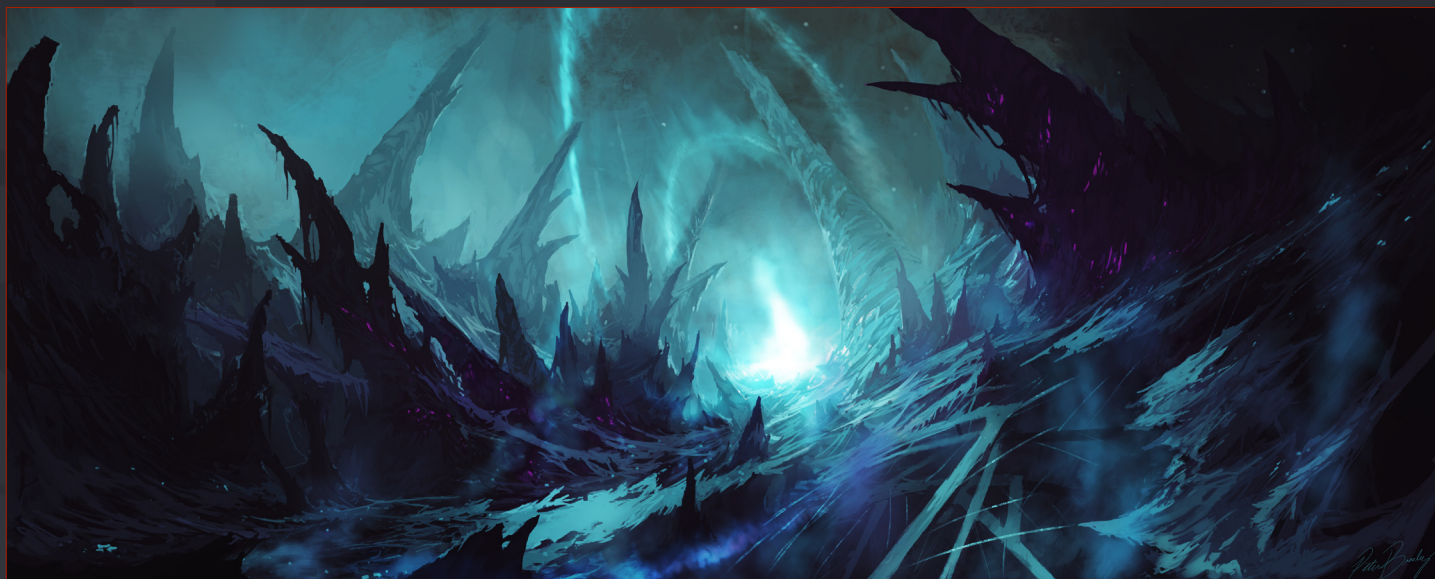
Gia Nguyen Hoang

Bradley Wright

Li Biao

Serge Birault

Dominus



Distant Haze

Peter Braeley

<http://peterbraeley.blogspot.com>

pbraeley@gmail.com

(Above)

Painting141

Bradley Wright

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Goodbye Pikachu!

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(Top Right)

Sniper

Jaime Martínez

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(Bottom Right)

Mega Girl

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Showdown

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Keep The Streets Empty

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In this eBook series our artists will be teaching us how to use information about tribes from the past and present to design new characters. The artists involved will gather references about their chosen tribal warrior and then translate this information into a dynamic character illustration. Character design is huge in both the game and movie industries and this eBook is a great guide as to how to design a character from a brief.

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Chapter 2 | July Issue 067

Maori

Chapter 3 | August Issue 068

Native American

Chapter 4 | This Issue

Viking

Chapter 5 | Next Issue

Fantasy



Tribal Warriors ^{Painting}

Chapter 04: Viking

Software Used: Photoshop

For this tutorial I was set the task of creating a concept illustration based on a Viking. I started by coming up with some keywords for myself. This helped me settle on the aesthetic style of the painting, along with the lighting and mood. I wanted the Viking to be very powerful and set against a foreboding and grim scenario. This helped me find a pose and expression that worked. I used references at every step and listened to music that reflected the feeling I was aiming for. I hope you find this tutorial useful!

Blocking and Silhouette

With this image I knew I wanted something that had a strong silhouette, and that the silhouette should be as "Viking" as possible. Viking horns were an obvious way to do this. Once I'd blocked in a rough shape, I started thinking about the other elements I would need to develop the blobby scribble, such as indicating the arms and weapons. I blocked in using a standard Hard Round brush with Pressure Sensitivity turned on (Fig.01). I then used the same brush as my eraser to cut out the shapes I wanted (Fig.02).

Contextual Design

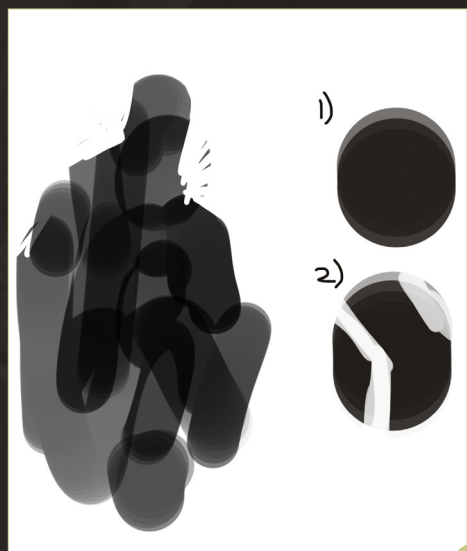
When I had the Viking design down as I wanted it I started thinking about what he was actually



doing. At first I thought about having a wounded Viking taking his last defensive strike. Then as I continued blocking in and moving elements around (such as the sword) I thought it would be interesting to show the Viking as an executioner. The man with the outstretched arm immediately worked for me (Fig.03). Everything was in his hand gesture and combined with the obvious striking angle of the Viking's sword this gave real weight to the image. In this scenario contrasting elements help to define each other.

If the Viking was chopping a tree down instead of a person, everything would be different, even though the pose and costume wouldn't be.

Another layer to the context was what the characters were wearing. Putting the characters in the clothing of the time and place meant researching what they would have worn, how they made their helmets, the decoration on their swords and shields etc. You have to absorb as much of the style as you can.





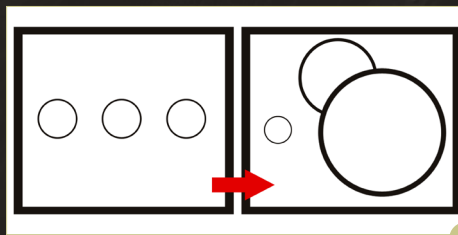
Atmospherics and Dynamics

Once I was happy with what the image was doing and saying, I started thinking about how I could increase the drama. I didn't want to get into the lighting of the scene yet, so I played around with losing edges and adding smoke and cloud effects to increase a sense of depth and motion (**Fig.04**).

I did this by creating some custom brushes sampled from clouds and using them along with erasers. Another thing to play around with is the flow value, which will slowly build up the stroke and give your brushes a different look (**Fig.05**).

Composition Principles

One thing that I was aware of at this stage was that the composition was looking very "side on". I knew I had to create a strong graphic pattern with my characters to keep the image interesting. Negative shapes and composition design lines helped me find interesting abstract shapes, such as the negative shapes around the axe and hands. I tried to make sure no more than two of the composition lines ever crossed over at a perfect "X". You can see in the example the small triangle made by the sword hand, axe and arm/leg line. If all the



lines crossed at the exact same point, the composition would distract and annoy the eye. A good principle to study is "Informal Composition" by Loomis (**Fig.06**).

A good exercise for practicing your composition is to take three circles. Order them in a neat and boring way in a frame. Then create a set of "mini-compositions", with the most dynamic combination of the three circles that you can (**Fig.07**).

Using Multiply for the Background

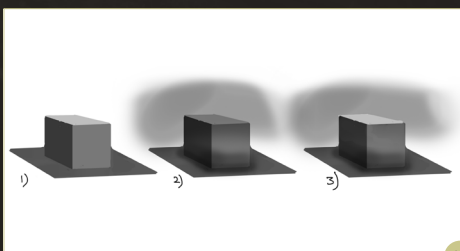
I intentionally left the background white in the beginning for two reasons. I wanted to stay focused on the characters as much as possible for the blocking in and I knew I could use Multiply to make it work later down the line. So once I was happy compositionally and contextually with the image I created a Multiply layer at the top of the layer stack. Since the

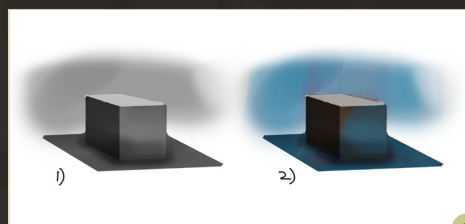
background was pure white, it could only go darker. Using the Multiply layer mode has a nice layering effect that builds the darks very well. I used large soft airbrushes and cloud custom brushes, focusing on establishing a lighting gradient more than anything else. Then I erased out the areas on my characters where it had gone too dark. This was how I established the mood and general lighting of the image (**Fig.08**).

Fig.09 illustrates exactly what I did for the Viking image. I painted the base painting and then painted in a Multiply layer above it. Finally I deleted the parts of that layer that were in the highlighted areas.

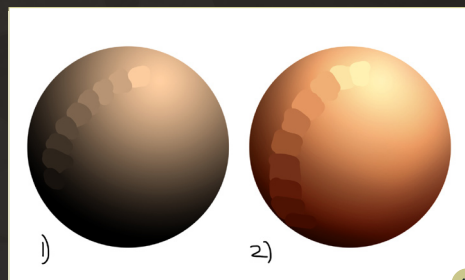
Overlay, Color Balance and Hard Light

Different layer modes are the way I would usually apply color to a piece. For the Viking image, I applied a wash of blue with orange to get a basic idea of the color temperature (warms and cools). Then I used Hard Light in the darkest darks to paint pure red into areas. Overlay wouldn't be able to do this as it doesn't affect pure blacks or whites. Hard Light, however, brings the black point up really well. I then used a Color Balance adjustment layer to grade the image to a tone I wanted (**Fig.10**).





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Fig.11 shows the interesting colors achieved by using just one Overlay on top of a black and white image. A good thing to do after this is painting opaque (Normal layer mode) back over the top. This gets rid of the obvious wash look.

Skin Tone

Sometimes when using Overlay and Hard Light layers the skin on characters doesn't look right. It's very easy to make skin look dead in an image. This is usually because one hue has been used to paint the form of the character's skin. Skin contains so many hues and saturation levels it takes more to make it look believable. It's something that needs a lot of practice, but it is key to making character illustrations look strong. So I re-graded my image, focusing only on the skin. I had the previous version's color palette to go back to later. Once I felt the skin looked natural color-wise, I copied them back into the blue, grim lighting version (**Fig.12**).

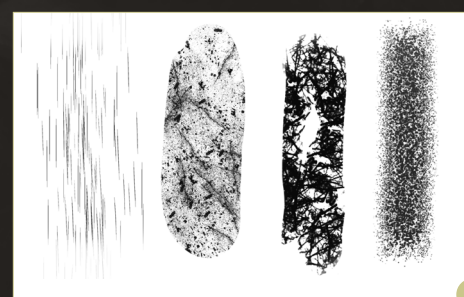


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Studying sub surface scattering will really help you to understand how skin works and how it can look authentic. In **Fig.13** you will see how sphere 1 has only one hue going from light to black. Sphere 2 goes through many hues and ramps up in saturation before it gets anywhere near true black.

Pose Refinement

I continued to refine and add details specific to Vikings such as leather straps, belts, studs and armor all sourced from references. At this stage of an image I always try to stop and take a step back. I try to re-analyze the poses and make sure everything is as good as it can be. With this image I moved the peasant's hand and head around, but decided not to change anything. The Viking's head, however, was bothering me. So I lasso selected his head/helmet and used Copy/ Merge and Paste to create a flattened selection I could move around. After trying multiple options,



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I settled on a slight position and rotation change (**Fig.14**). This increased the impression of him swinging his sword. Every time you change something in a piece, question whether it dilutes or enhances the image.

Particles and Finishing Effects

I knew from the start that I wanted this image to have a lot of depth and visual effects. As the weather in the image seemed very dull and grim, I thought I'd try making the rain from one of the previous attempts work. Rain has a great mood and adds a lot in terms of reflections, specular highlights, particles and things like water splash. For the rain, I created a custom brush using the standard Hard Round which I flattened in the Roundness setting as much as possible. I then just played with scattering values until I thought it read like rain. I also used other particle custom brushes to add miscellaneous texture effects like grit and mud into the image. Applying a small amount of Motion Blur to these elements adds a lot of depth (**Fig.15**). At the end I created a vignette to the image and blurred the edges whilst sharpening my focal points (**Fig.16**).



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Jon McCoy

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Or contact him at:

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What to Do With These Hippies?

Almost every artist gets to a point when they decide that they want to start a new and unique project that they have total creative control of. When you get to this point it can be hard to decide what exactly it is that you would like to do. How do you come up with ideas? And how do you develop them and make them interesting? In this series David Smit, with the help of Nadia Karroue, will be showing us how to create an idea and turn it into a unique and interesting project. This series will be concentrating on David's visually stunning self-made world called the Hippie-Pippie-Pocalypse and will have something for everyone, from idea generation techniques to design and painting advice.

Chapter 1 – Ideas, Sketching and the Hippies

Software Used: Photoshop

Remember the peace movement from the 60s? What if it had been successful? What if mankind had decided that instead of devoting all of its time to making profits it would focus on science and space exploration instead? What kind of world would we be living in right now? If these questions tickle you, keep on reading! If not, well I'm sure there are orcs somewhere close by...

If you are still here, I am honored to be able to poison your mind with hippie thoughts and slowly plant very subtle ideas in your head. This is the first article, to that end, in a series spread over six months, about the development of this space hippie project. This first article covers the early process and from then on I will cover more specific designs issues like the hippies, the space-vans, the illustrations, the story and the future of this project.

In this article I will talk about what inspired me in the first place to start drawing these space hippies. How that led to the decision that I needed to give birth to a new sub-genre. (I really think we've reached the limit of reusing orcs, wizards and girls in skimpy armor.) How I then went about creating the world of the space hippies (and all of the horrible failures that came with it!) How I then got stuck in a rut because I had this cool world, but nothing happened in it. How with the help of a co-creator I managed to get out of it. And how all of that eventually started to spawn this neat little project called the Hippie-Pippie-Pocalypse! So basically I'm bearing my bones for all to see. But please, don't rearrange my bones while they're bare – I hate it when that happens.

So let's get started at the start. How did it start?



A Peaceful Galaxy

Just like a lot of, if not all, people, I've always wanted to create a project of my own. Something to pour all of my views and ideas into. Something to satisfy my appetite to create, not just on an artistic level, but also on a personal one.

“But even with this overwhelming inspiration, all of my ideas were just random incoherent concepts”

The ideas of a fundamentally positive world and a lot of other random thoughts associated with space travel, robots and whatnot hijacked my mind a few years ago. They were fueled by experiences like traveling around the world, living in a hippie camp for three months, cruising in a van through the mountains of New Zealand, meeting my amazing girlfriend, visiting festivals etc. In other words, experiencing the good life. (Did you know there is actually a world outside of the internet?) I can tell you, that funky “real-world” stuff will inspire you!

But even with this overwhelming inspiration, all of my ideas were just random incoherent concepts, and most of them weren't even art related! (A non-monetary system, science, education, cookies, personal development, expression etc.) They were random unconnected elements and connecting all those things with a singular red thread might have been the most difficult part. Strangely enough the red thread was there, right in front of me the whole time. In hindsight the only possible conclusion for why it took me so long is that I'm seriously slow-minded. During the time I spent thinking about these subjects, I had been drawing random characters based on these amazing people I met during my travels. These shiny happy people all had something in common: they were hippies! (Although I wonder how they would react if I called them that to their faces...) I have no clear idea how I finally came to the concept of hippies in the future, only that I was in the shower and suddenly ran out and hugged my fully clothed, scared looking girlfriend and exclaimed that I had an idea for my own project!





So yeah, hippie was the common ground, the underlying connection that I sought. But now that I had found my beautiful shiny red thread, I faced a new challenge! What will be the epic conflict these hippies have to deal with? Aliens? Orcs with blue glowing swords? Evil regime? Mega corporations? War? I felt all of these kinds of themes would only weaken the concept of a peaceful world.

Meanwhile my girlfriend Nadia introduced me to her favorite TV show *Firefly* (you should have seen her face when I told her I hadn't seen it yet). She's the type of person that loves to analyze movies, comics – basically all forms of media. She de-constructs them to the point that

“One of the things I really wanted to avoid was to create something within a popular sub-genre like fantasy or steampunk”

I completely lose track and stare at her with a blank expression in my eyes. During one of her rants she made me realize what made that show so great. The epic story happens somewhere in the background. Mostly the show is about the characters. Sure there are some “Bad Guys”

here and there, but much of the conflict that made the show such a pleasure to watch lay in the human interaction!

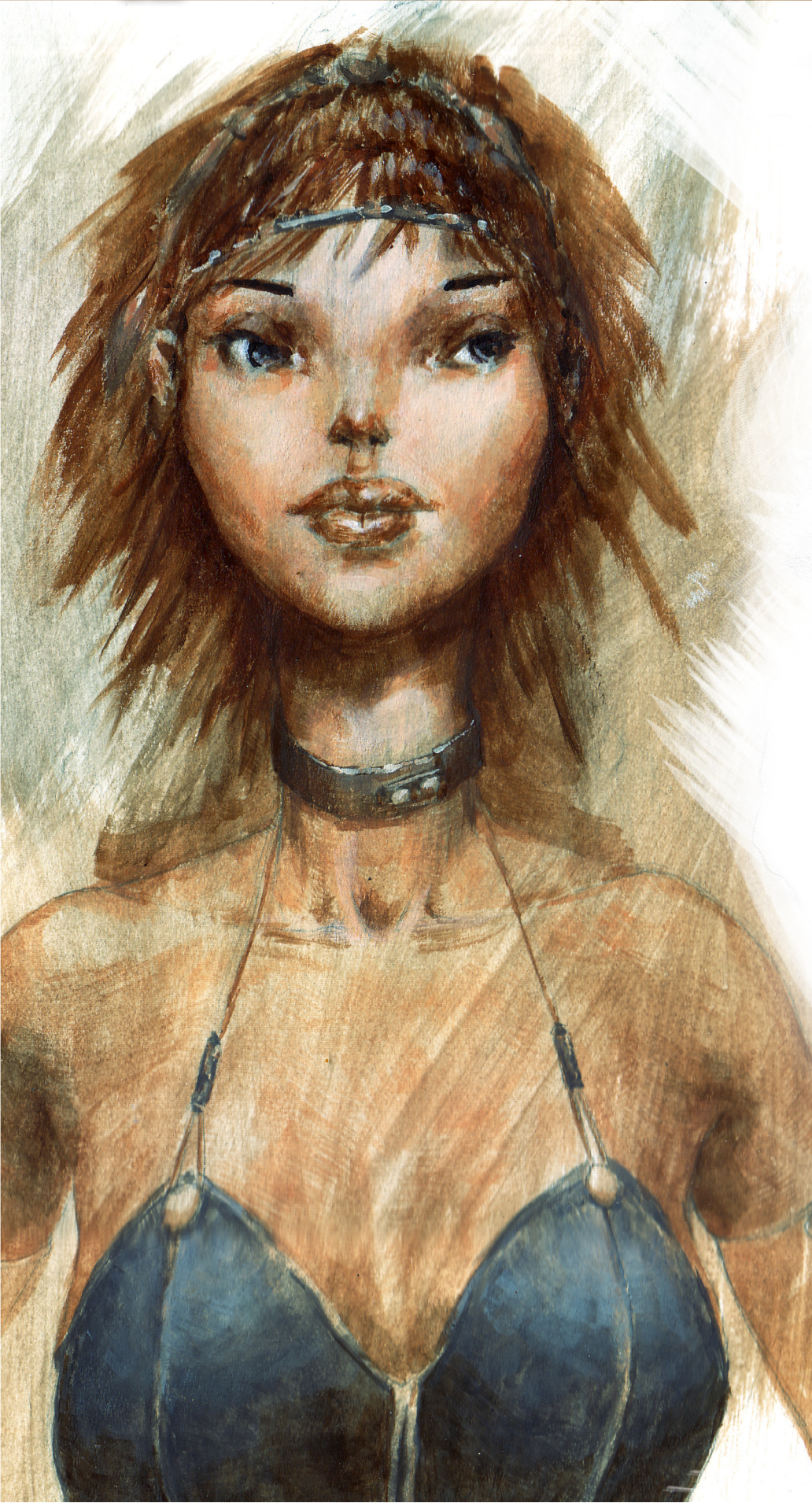
So what if you left out that Good vs. Evil epic stuff altogether? Non-epicness and a focus on personal relationships would serve the hippie concept way better. So there it was: a peaceful galaxy, no fear, no war, just a bunch of people dealing with each other and themselves. It made sense! And trust me; I very rarely make any sense, so when I feel that I do, I hold on to it. Like a starving rabbit to a carrot!

A New Sub-genre

When I first decided that I was actually going to do something with the thoughts and concepts floating around in my head I knew that one of the things I really wanted to avoid was creating something within a popular sub-genre like fantasy or steampunk because let's face it: these genres are getting kind of stale. They're cool, absolutely, but there are only so many times you can revive a dying rabbit. (I have no idea why I keep going back to rabbits and random sayings.) I'd rather create a new sub-genre altogether! So after figuring all of that stuff out, I still had no real idea what I was doing. What I did know however is that I had







a scandalous amount of fun trying to figure out how the universe of the hippies worked. I wasn't even close to ready to start working on anything more specific, so I guess this part just happened.

“You sketch and search and you mostly find directions you do not want to go in”

I have to warn you though, even though I felt like I'd found a direction to go into, this part of the process was filled with failed sketches. Sometimes that can be pretty discouraging, but as far as I know there really isn't another way to do it. You sketch and search and mostly find directions you do not want to go in. But every so often you come up with a sketch that makes you think “yeah, this is cool, I want more of this!” Usually these are sketches from other people...

I was still very much undecided about the sketches I'd made. But at least it was pretty easy to decide what the general idea of this new sub-genre should be.

Systematic Approach

I started gathering all my vague ideas together, organizing them and creating an overview, on a basic level, of the newly created universe. It was a systematic approach, I wasn't thinking of any characters or story. I was more concerned with issues like how does a society like this function? I wrote down a bunch of questions and started to answer them.

For example, how does the education system work? I've been interested in Howard Gardner's *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* for quite some time. It seems that our current idea of learning is only successful for a small percentage of people.

There are a number of cognitive abilities and



in our current school system we only focus on one of those abilities. This leaves kids that don't fit into this tiny, outdated system to grow up thinking they are dumb and stressed out trying to perform in the "correct way". This is a waste of talent and in my perfect utopia, people would know, understand and develop their actual talent.

"This was when I realized that I needed a co-creator with different virtues to make up for my vices"

Some of the other questions that kept me off the streets for a while are: if there is no money, how do people trade? Do they trade at all? What if there was no need for trade? What about energy? Do people still live in family units as they do now? If there's no need for violence and greed because basic needs are provided by technology, what do people desire then?

The list went on and on. I even went as far as designing how a non-monetary system would work in a culture that lived next to cultures with a monetary system. Useless really, but loads of fun to think about. And in the end, I think it helped me greatly understand the world I was creating.



It felt very useful (and fun!) to design this space hippie world, question by question. But there was one problem. It was a pretty cool, fundamentally positive, space hippie world, but without context, it was a dead space hippie world. And an utopia that's dead might actually not be that utopian. So, I needed to change my process to get to the next step.

Adjusting Your Process

This is where I really got stuck. I just kept on making more paintings and sketches for this

really exciting setting, but it lacked a goal. I had ideas about making a book with art and explanations for the setting in it. I hoped it would be an easy way to tie everything I had made so far together. It did not.

I guess Nadia saw me struggling, because she started casual brainstorms about possible stories that could happen in that setting. What seemed incredibly difficult and frustrating before was suddenly way less difficult and frustrating! We'd both sit behind my computer (or in a bar) making up funny stuff that could happen, and she would frantically type the whole thing up. Suddenly we had a whole bunch of characters, situations and little scenes. These stories weren't final, more like random pieces of conversation or situations, but I felt I had something more specific to work with.

I think this was when I realized that I needed a co-creator with different virtues to make up for my vices. Nadia had been occasionally helping me out since the beginning, so she already knew almost everything that was going on. She also had some very interesting things to add to it, things I would never think of myself. She had theories about how to casually switch gender roles and cliches about sexual orientations in



stories, something that fitted the hippie culture perfectly. I will go over those things in future articles when I start talking about more specific design choices but for now you'll just have to believe me! But anyway, it was clear we needed to join forces. So we did. Obviously.

Basically my zoomed out way of thinking worked very well for me when I first started out. I felt very comfortable creating the setting and the fundamental principles of the world. But I did not know how to let the world design be and start thinking about the smaller things. The more specific design decisions. Things like, why does this vehicle look this way? Who lives in it? What is it used for? Why is this character wearing this outfit? What does he or she do for fun? Nadia's ideas for characters, stories and scenes seemed to bring an end to that problem. Well it wasn't solved instantly, but we were going in the



right direction. At a certain point we decided we needed a very specific goal to design things for. We needed a story.

A Comic Within a Sub-genre?

A sub-genre is great, but if there's nothing to show off that sub-genre it's still nothing. So finally I gave into the thought that we needed a specific project within this sub-genre, to solidify the whole thing. Nadia had been trying to convince me that we should do a comic. Her reasoning was pretty simple. Since we don't have the budget to make a movie or a video game (although I tried! But not being a programmer brings it's problems when programming a video game), we decided to do a comic. Just a bunch of characters. Put them in a van in space and let them hash their problems out. The designs from the previous stage could now easily be adjusted and fitted to the context. Stuff started to fall into place really quickly at this stage. (It was slightly uncanny how many things fell perfectly into place.) This is when things got euphoric. This is when it started feeling real!

Having decided all that, we quickly reached the conclusion that it had be a road trip story. A space odyssey if you will. It was a perfect excuse to make all kinds of different designs for different planets, animals, interactions, space-crafts, people etc. Everything was possible, but now with a clear direction.

There is much more to tell about this project and a lot more sketches, drawing and illustrations, but this is it for now. Stay tuned because next month's article will be dedicated to the characters, their anatomy design and fashion etc.

David Smit and Nadia Karroue

For more information please visit:

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<http://vg-heart.blogspot.com/>

Or contact them at:

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Chapter 2: Design and Hippiie Anatomy by David Smit
and Nadia Karroue

Matte Painting

Chapter 5: Transforming the time of day by Peter Swigut

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J. Love 10

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Concept

Chapter 2 | July Issue 067

Adding the Sky

Chapter 3 | August Issue 078

Adding Elements

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Lighting

Chapter 5 | Next Issue

Transforming the Time of Day

Matte painting is becoming more and more important in the CG industry. The backdrops of some of the most epic scenes in films have been created by matte painters who have used the techniques touched upon in this tutorial. This eBook will talk you through an entire matte painting and show you how to add photos to your canvas and then integrate them into your scene. This is a must-have for any experienced or novice matte painter.

MATTE PAINTING



Chapter 04: Lighting

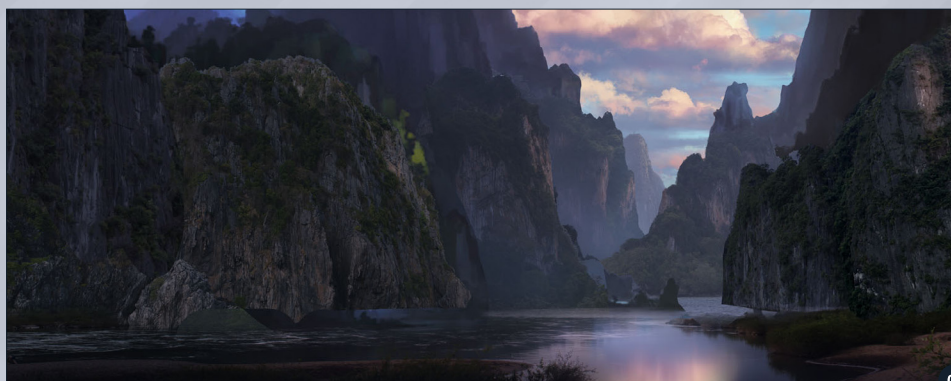
Software Used: Photoshop

Refining the Features

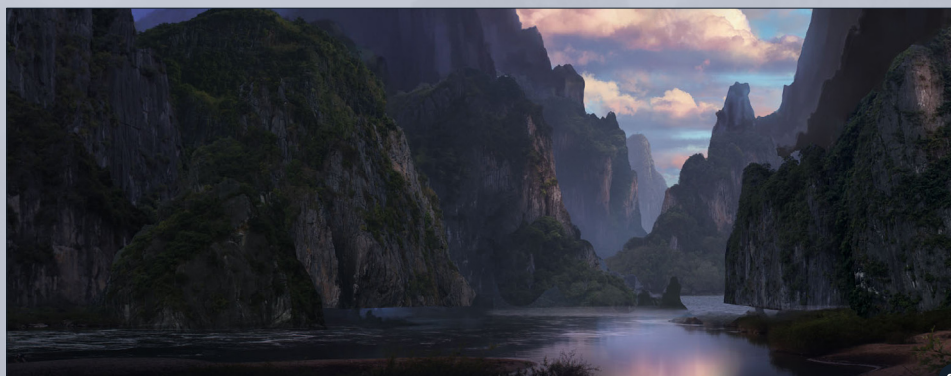
Once most of the concept sketch was covered with photographs I started to work on the form and shape of each mountain individually (**Fig.01**). First of all I added seven different photographs that resembled my concept. I wasn't too concerned about their exact shape because I knew I would paint on top of them or add more photos at a later stage.

Here I have added more photos to make the main mountain (which will also include the waterfall later) look more like I had intended it to (**Fig.02**). I picked a mountain with a little opening at the bottom of it because it looked like it would be a nice setting for a waterfall. It turned out later on that it was not necessary because it got covered with the splashing water at the base of the waterfall, but it is always good to think about the painting as a real construction with different layers of believability. For example, if you were making this for a film and the director decided he wanted to turn the waterfall off you would need some believable features in place.

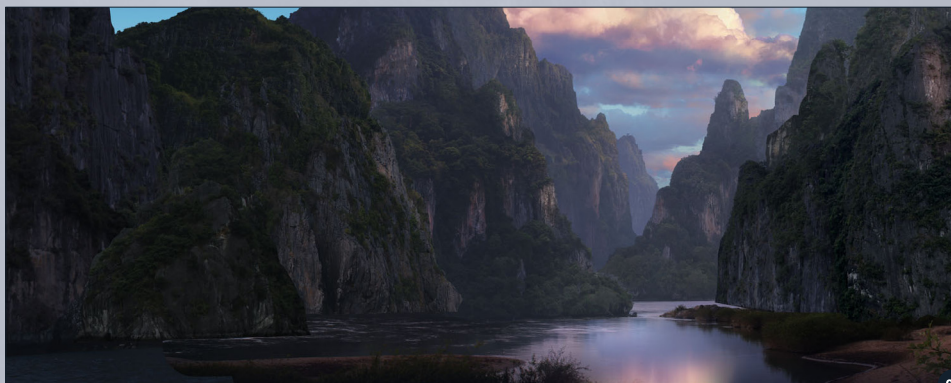
Then I worked on the image, starting from the farthest layers (**Fig.03**). At this point I was concentrating on giving the mountains a nice defined form. The most important thing to me was the area facing the sun, because the viewer tends to focus there. Because of this I didn't



01



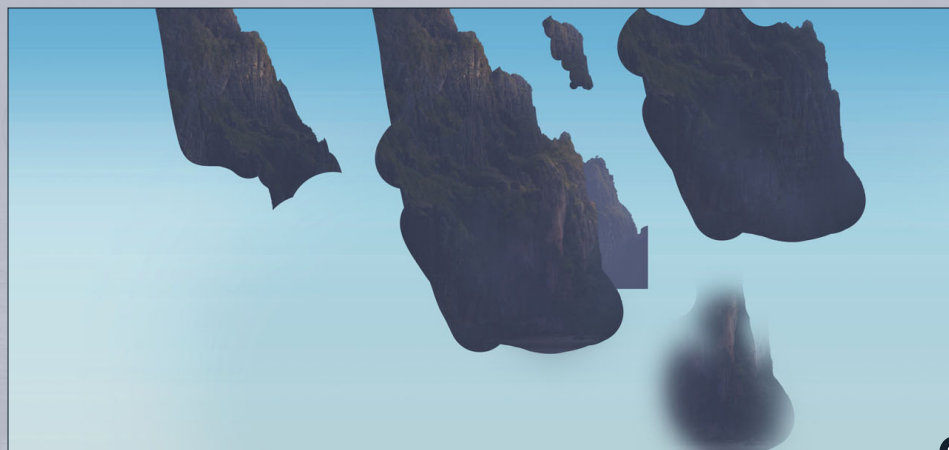
02



03

want these parts of the mountain range to look flat and uninteresting. Also it was important to paint or find photos that were very different to each other, particularly in reference to the

color value and shape of rocks and trees. I find that it is important to have a lot of contrasting features as it adds interest and keeps your eyes entertained.



04

Background Features

Here is a little breakdown of the mountains in the background (**Fig.04**). I used four different photos to achieve the desired appearance. I color corrected all four of the photos and painted in the mask channel of each layer to blend them together nicely. I work with two monitors and I am always looking for appropriate photos on the second monitor. When I find one I bring it into the painting and check to see if it is useful or not.

The Waterfall

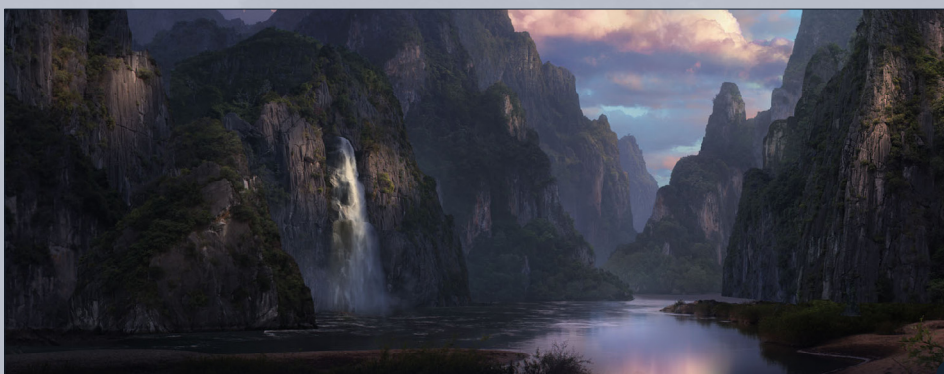
For the waterfall I was fortunate to find one that matched perfectly (**Fig.05**). It rarely happens that I will find an ideal image that requires very little work. In this case I just had to color correct it with Curves to add a warmer tone to the highlights and Multiply it with a dark blue color to shade the bottom and top parts. I shaded the top part of the image specifically to break up the otherwise long and boring shape of the waterfall.

Here is the final result after adding the waterfall to the painting (**Fig.06**). I changed the mountain on the right-hand side, because even though I had part of it covered I was not satisfied with the overall shape of it. I also changed the look of the mountain that the waterfall fell from. I gave most of my attention to that part because it is the focal area of the image and I wanted it to look more interesting. I also wanted to have decent looking faces on that mountain as they would be reflecting some sunlight.

I decided to change the shape of the mountain behind the waterfall (**Fig.07**). There was no continuity between these two mountains and by changing the look of the front area I created more space for the nice highlights. By placing clouds in between the mountains I could separate them and add more depth and height to the composition. I didn't add any further clouds in the foreground because I wanted it



05



06

to appear as if they were only above a certain height and therefore out of sight of the viewer. I often turn the concept on and off to make sure that I retain the original simplicity and beauty that was in the concept. When adding images

things can get a little chaotic so it is definitely important to keep your concept nearby.

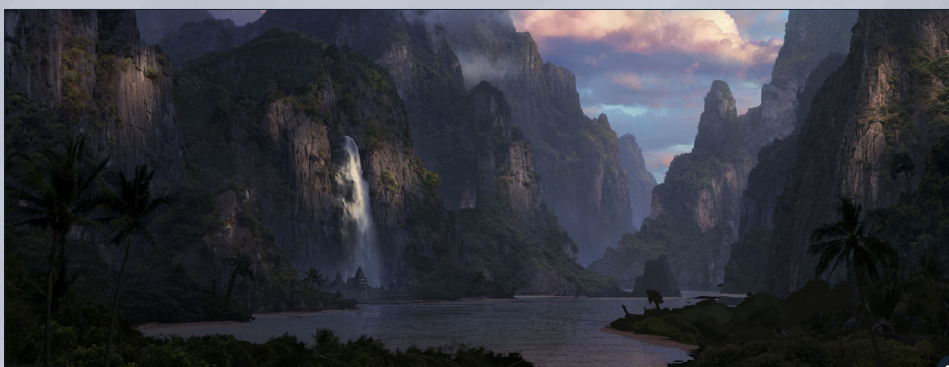
As I progress with a painting and hopefully add to it, the elements that don't work well



07

start to show up. For example, in this image the features on the right in the foreground showed up as looking strange because the background was looking quite good and clean. By looking at your image carefully you can spot the imperfections. I often see my painting as a living hydra with many heads; as I cut one of the heads off another one grows up and needs to be taken care of. I suggest saving merged versions on top of your layers and switching them on and off once in a while to see the progress that the image has made and if any areas are showing up as not looking good. I have heard that traditional artists that use oils sometimes take photographs of their work and the scene they are painting to compare the two alongside each other. Luckily, as digital artists we have easy ways around having to do that.

Here I got a little confused about where this painting is going (**Fig.08**). I was not happy with the overall flow of the piece. It looked too flat and there was no path for the eye to follow. Even though I had concept art to work from I was finding it hard to make the image look real and pretty. Often when I find myself doubting the quality of an image I paint on top of my painting and try to change it to my taste. For this image I painted a little island in the background to add more layers of depth. I also tried to introduce another island in the right foreground, but that idea made the composition look a little complicated.



08



09

I then added the small island in the background, boats and many palm trees (**Fig.09**). The purpose of adding boats was to break up the coastline as I found it really boring and too straight. It also made the image more interesting. The trees added more interest at the edges and as well as more depth. Also, as a final step, I color corrected the entire painting. I graded as well to make it brighter towards the top and right-hand side. I also upped the contrast. I had to take particular care with the light wrap to make sure the painting didn't look like a photo collage.

If you closely compare all of the pictures you will see that I have been transforming every mountain bit by bit over the course of painting (**Fig.10**).

Piotrek Swigut

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10

You can tell a lot about a person by their face. You can tell their state of mind, you can tell where they are from, you can even make a guess about their character. For this reason being able to portray the features of a face correctly when doing character concepts is vital. In this series of tutorials our artists will be looking at how you would tackle designing characters with very specific features, but they will not just be talking about it in the context of one character. They will be showing us how to paint certain features that can be applied to different character types such as gaunt, obese, bruised etc. If you are into creating character concepts and want to add story to the face of your design this is the series for you.



Character Portrayal

July Issue 067 Chapter 01 | Gaunt **August Issue 068** Chapter 02 | Child **This Issue** Chapter 03 | Elderly Man

Next Issue Chapter 04 | Obese **November Issue 071** Chapter 05 | Beaten Up **December Issue 072** Chapter 06 | Tattooed

Chapter 03 - Elderly Man

Software used: Photoshop

Introduction

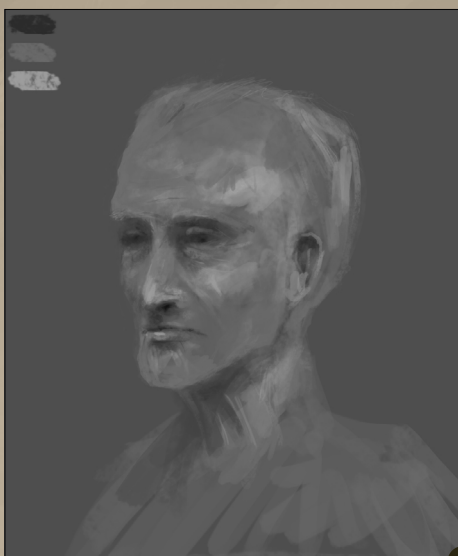
I chose the subject of an old person for this tutorial as, in many ways, they have the most interesting faces. Their faces often show the history of their lives and are full of character compared to a younger person. When you look at older people there are certain aspects that help define their age, most notably the increased number of wrinkles and the loss of the skin's elasticity, which is particularly noticeable around the eyes. Other obvious signs are also a thinning and graying of the hair. Of course, every individual is different with some appearing more gaunt as they age and developing more pronounced bone structure whilst others may perhaps have more folds across their face and less in the way of finer wrinkles.

One thing that is often noticeable is that older people seem to have bigger ears. This is due to the fact that these never completely stop growing and is why ear lobes appear larger in the older generation. Ageing is caused both by a natural degenerative process and external factors such as exposure to the sun or smoking. However for the purposes of this tutorial we will assume our character has aged naturally and not been affected too much by sun damage.

Blocking In

I often like to paint my characters on a different layer to the background as this gives me the opportunity to experiment with the color scheme throughout the process without affecting the main subject. The first step is to establish the rough composition and block in the shape of the character. I created a background layer using a neutral gray and then blocked in the portrait on a new layer above this.

Fig.01 shows the first stage, which was done digitally in Photoshop. The tonal range can be seen in the upper-left corner, showing the

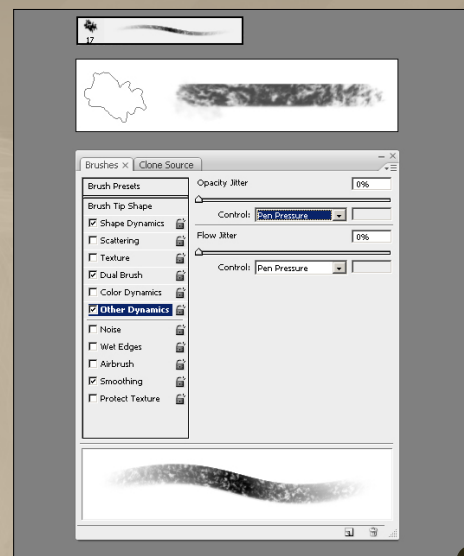


01

darkest through to the lightest values with the mid value being used to block in the main shape. I decided initially that the light source should come from the right-hand side and so focused the highlights accordingly.

I used a textured Chalk brush during this stage and in fact throughout the entire painting process – this can be seen in **Fig.02**. I always make sure that the opacity is set to Pen Pressure as it affords the most control when using a graphics tablet.

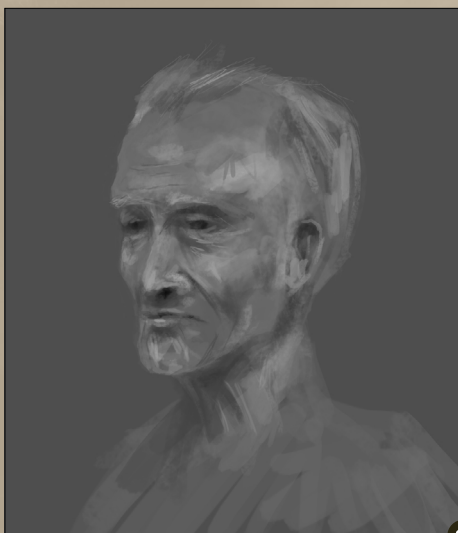
Using the same brush I continued to build up the face. At this stage I was unsure about exactly where the main wrinkles would lie and so added some random highlights and shadows across the face in order to experiment a little and get a



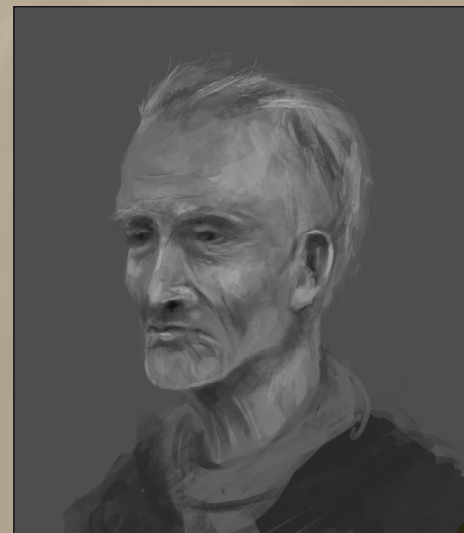
02

better idea about what he would look like. I also started to create the volume of the hair (**Fig.03**).

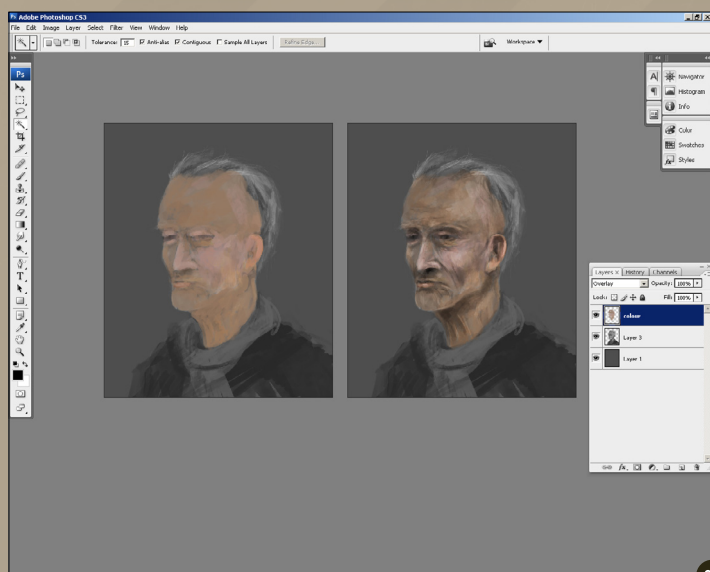
I continued to build the detail into the face using the same Chalk brush as well as adding in the clothing (**Fig.04**). The thing to remember with any portrait – especially with an older person who has more wrinkles and variety across the skin – is that you should never lose sight of the overall volume and light source. You can see in this image that the main shadows are under the chin and nose as well as the eye sockets, cheek bones and below the bottom lip. In contrast the highlights are placed on those planes that are nearest such as the right side of the forehead, cheek and nose. If you establish these volumes early on you can then use them as a tonal guide when adding in detail later on.



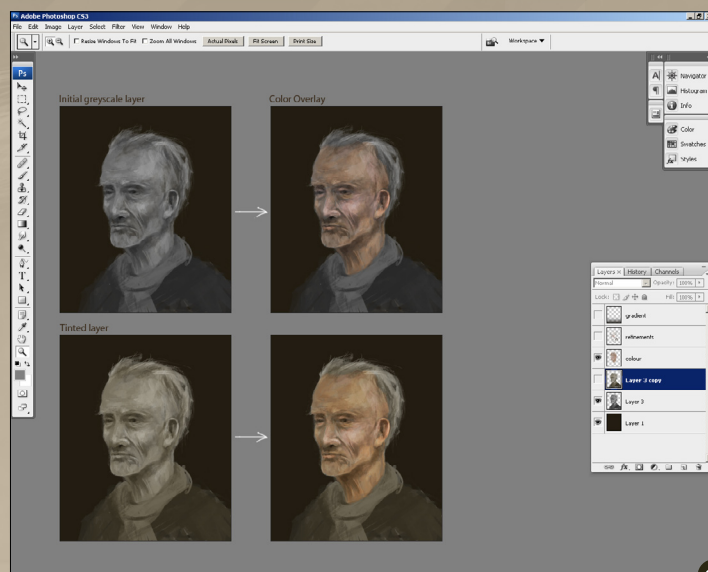
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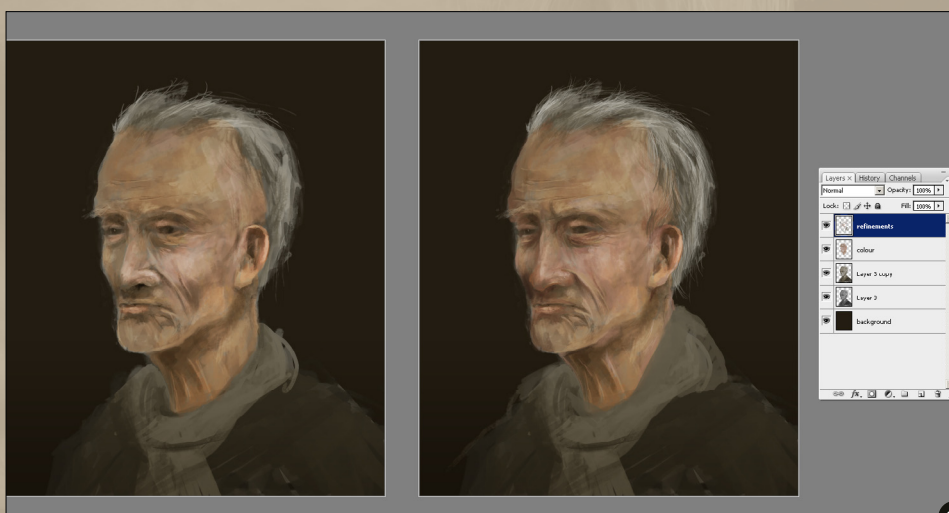


06

Adding Color

The portrait at this stage was well underway despite being a little crude and so it felt like a good time to introduce some color. Sometimes I use color from the start and at other times I work in black and white as I did here and then add the color on a separate layer. In this instance I created a new layer set to Overlay and then painted in a general skin tone (**Fig.05**). You can see the color set to Normal blending mode on the left and the resultant effect when set to Overlay on the right.

The advantage of using this technique is that you can quickly and easily experiment with the color scheme independently. Because the blending mode is set to Overlay it means



07

that the color maintains the tonal range of the underlying layer and therefore enables you to change the color palette with ease. Usually once I am happy with how everything looks I flatten the layers, but during this early phase it can prove quite useful.

After trying some variations by way of Image > Adjustments > Color Balance I decided to experiment by duplicating the grayscale layer and tinting it towards a warmer hue to see the effect. This seemed to add more life to the skin tones which I preferred and so I left this layer intact. The initial layer with the color overlay can be seen in the upper two images in **Fig.06** and can be compared to the tinted layer below.

I was quite happy with the color scheme at this stage and so started to refine the details. For

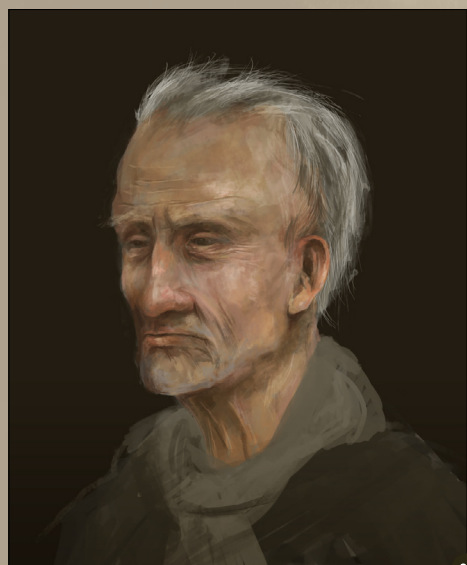
the purposes of this tutorial I kept these on a separate layer set to Normal blending mode.

Fig.07 shows the layer at the top of the palette (called "refinements") and the resultant effect in the right-hand image.

These refinements blend the various parts of the face and smooth out the tonal range as well as add some definition.

Fig.08 shows a further stage where I have added in some more color variation to the skin and painted in some cooler values around the chin to suggest stubble. I have also accentuated some of the highlights around the nose, cheek and forehead.

At this point I thought that the head was looking a little elongated and gaunt so I decided to use



08

the Warp tool to change the proportions. First of all I flattened every layer except the background and then went to Edit > Transform > Warp (Fig.09).

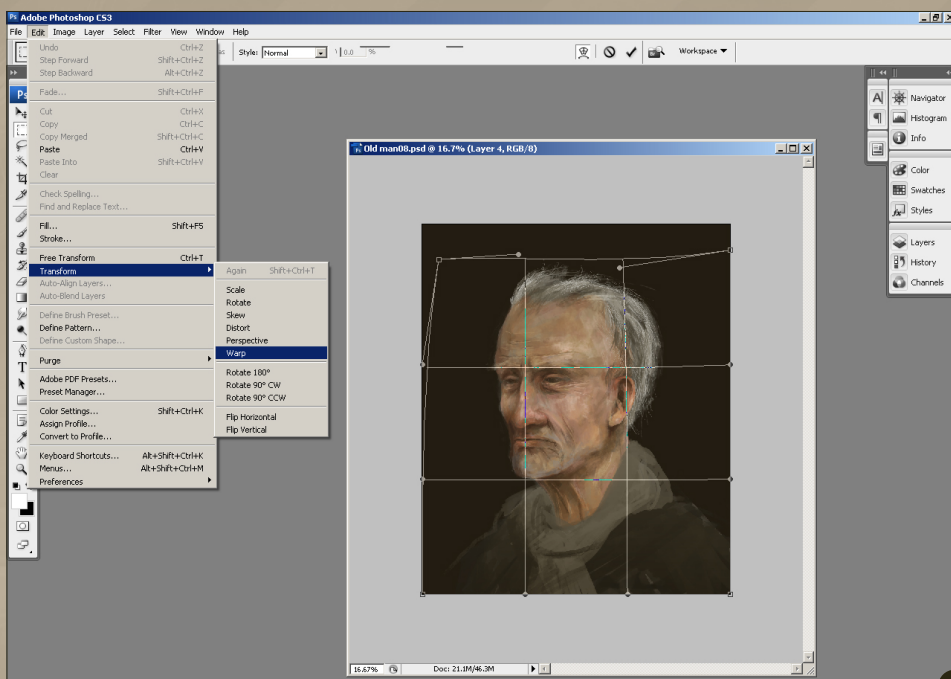
I compressed the head slightly and then copied and pasted the eyes onto a new layer and made them slightly larger using Edit > Transform > Scale. I then used a soft edged eraser to blend them in with the head and then flattened the two layers (Fig.10).

With the shape of the head looking a little less gaunt now and the skin tones at a reasonable stage it was time to work on the hair a little more. When it comes to painting hair I find that the best way is to use a very small brush (1-3 pixels wide) and simply paint in the individual hairs using repeated strokes.

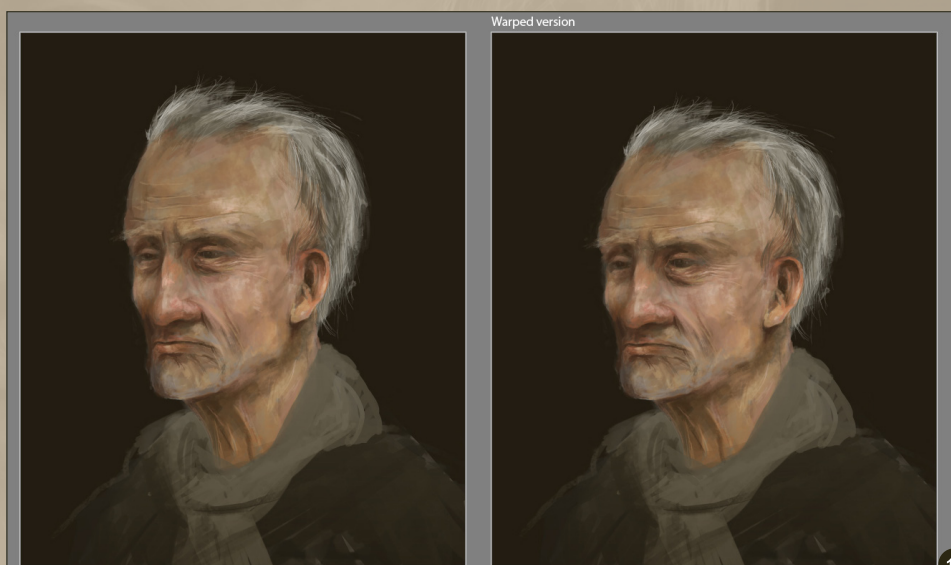
I decided to add a new layer for the hair detail as well as the stubble in order that it could be changed or edited with the eraser. Fig.11 shows this layer at the top of the layers palette.

Final Stages

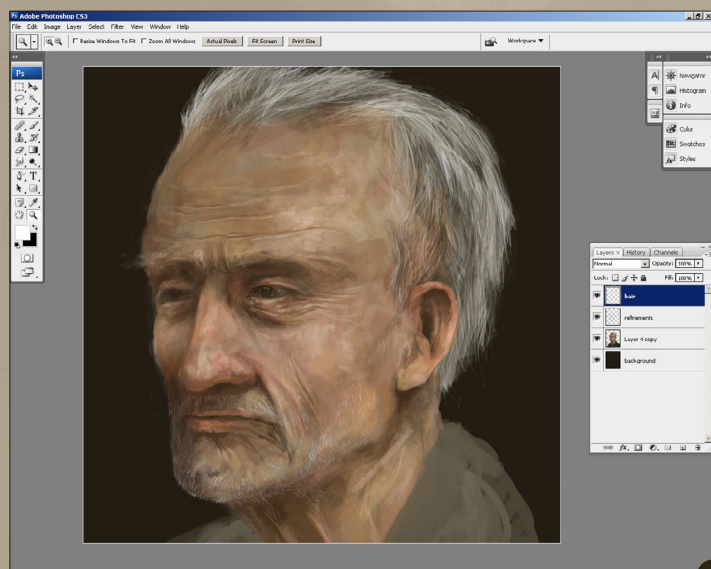
The portrait at this point was reaching the final stages but as the subject orientated around age I thought it would be interesting to give it a quality similar to an old photograph by way of a vignette and some weathering around the edges (Fig.12). I used a textured brush to create a



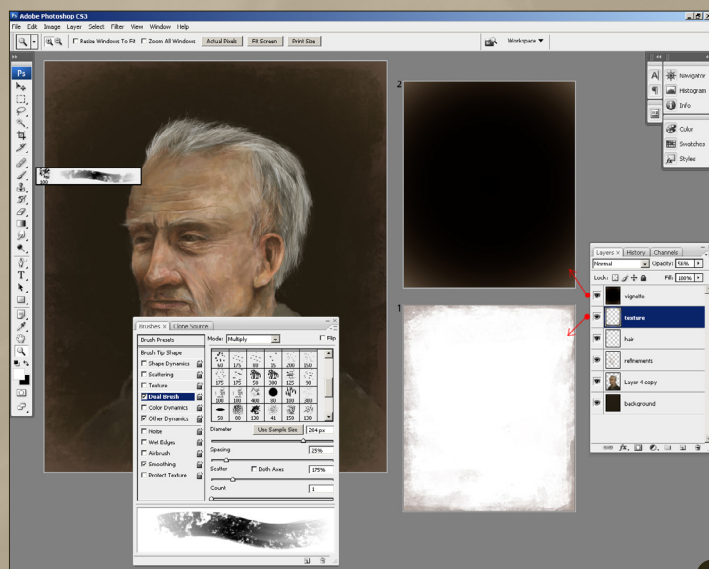
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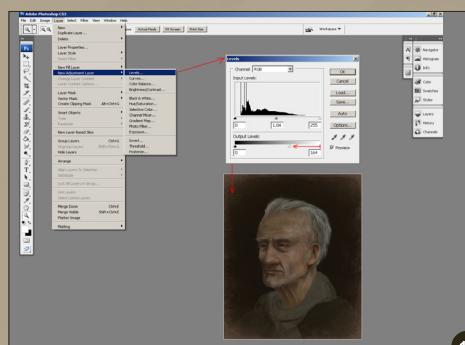
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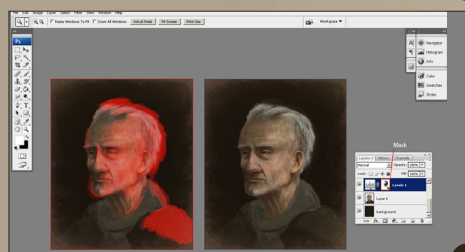
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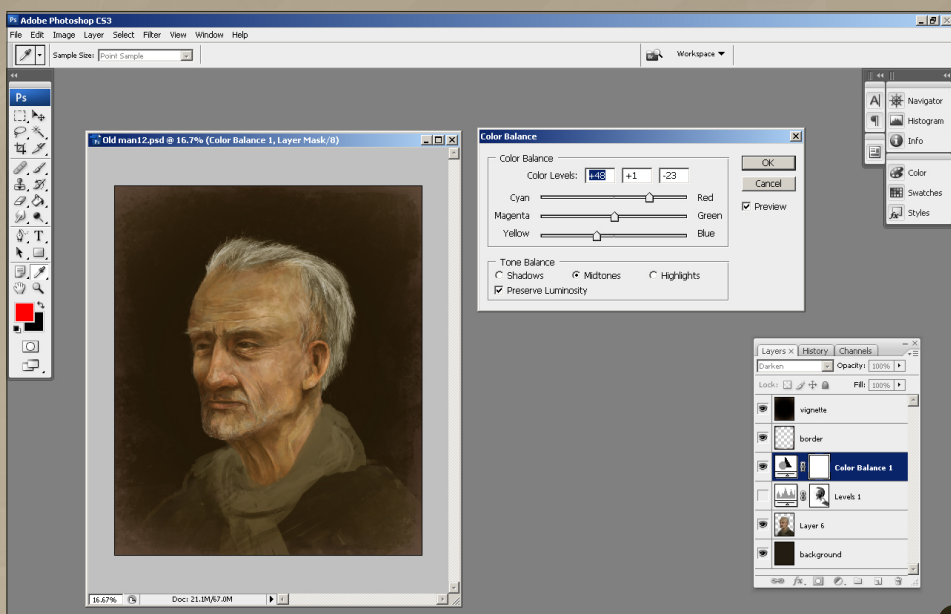


14

border using a pale brown which I then made semi transparent by turning the opacity down to around 60%. You can see what this layer looks like on a white background (1). I then added a vignette layer (2) which was set to Screen blending mode at around 50% opacity. When the two layers are combined they look similar to the main image on the left.

I wanted to increase the contrast between the light and dark areas across the face and liked the notion of the left side of the head almost blending into the background. The fact that part of the face could be shown to disappear into shadow seemed to suggest a transient state, which suited the subject. To do this I went to Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Levels (Fig.13). I altered the Output Levels by moving the white slider towards the centre (red arrow), thus darkening the entire character.

Adjustment layers automatically incorporate a mask which appears as a thumbnail in the layers palette (outlined in red in Fig.14). The mask is initially filled with white and shows the adjustment layer, but by painting with black in the actual mask you are able to reveal the layer below – in this case the lighter version. The left image shows the mask from within the channels palette (red area) and the final effect on the right. The red area reveals the



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original layer (shown in black in the small mask thumbnail) whilst the white area shows the levels adjustment.

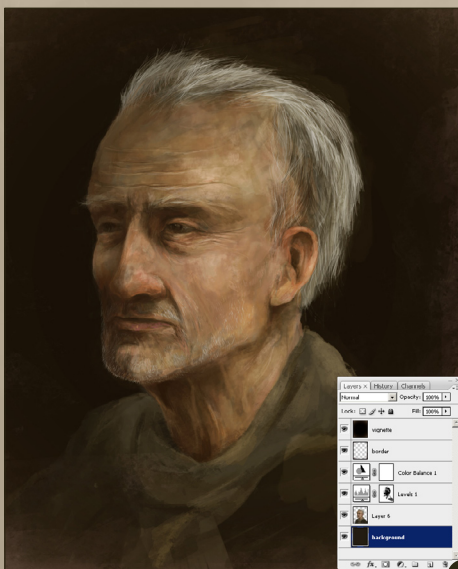
You can paint into the mask using black and white and therefore alter it at any point without affecting the original layer below. This enables a non-destructive form of editing which is very flexible.

I added one further adjustment layer, which was Color Balance. Fig.15 shows the settings that were used and the how they appeared in the layers palette on the right-hand side. I used this layer to add a warmer tint to the overall picture by increasing the red and yellow values.

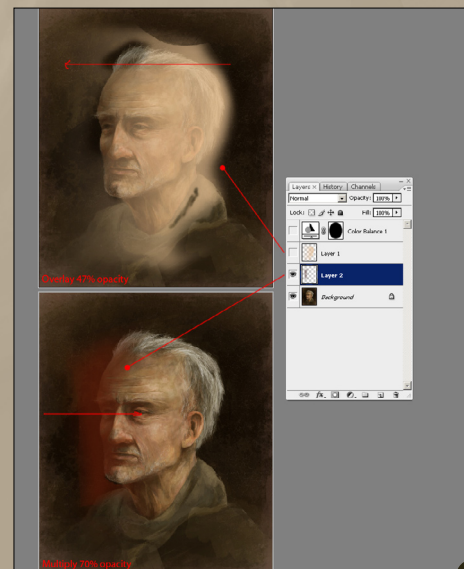
Here is a current version of the portrait with the border, vignette and both the adjustment layers (Fig.16).

The image was almost complete, but the color still seemed a little subdued and so as opposed to creating extra adjustment layers I opted to use a gradient on a separate layer to add a color wash.

To increase the light intensity I used a pale orange and dragged a Foreground To Transparent gradient from the right side of the head across to the far left (red arrow – upper image – Fig.17). I then set the blending mode to Overlay at 47% opacity.



16



17

To darken the shadows I followed the same technique but this time chose dark red and dragged the same gradient from the left side of the head to roughly the middle of the right eye (red arrow – lower image – Fig.17). I then set the blending mode to Multiply at 70% opacity. Using an eraser, I then deleted parts of both gradients to focus the washes more accurately.

You will notice that I have also added a Color Balance adjustment layer which is restricted to the outer edges via the black ellipse in the mask. This simply adds a warmer tint to the vignette.

With these final three layers the image can be flattened and then called complete (**Fig.18**).

Richard Tilbury

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Or contact him at:

rich@3dtotal.com



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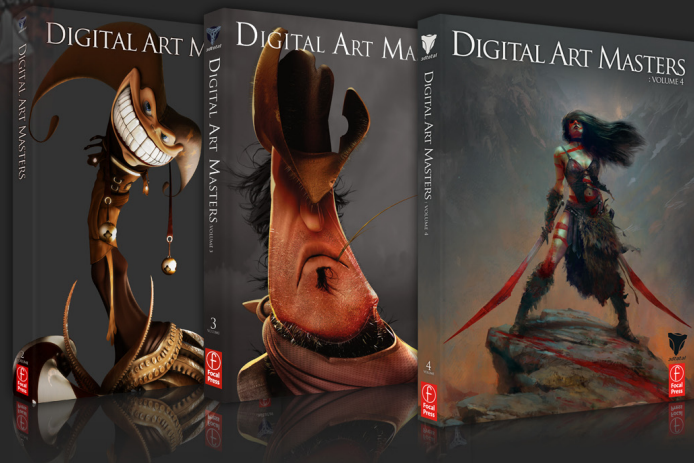
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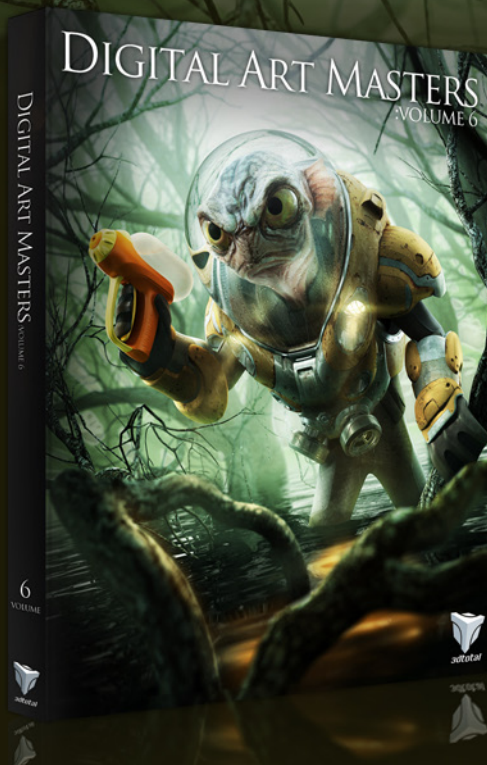
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THE TRIALS OF DEVOTION

MAKING OF BY NOAH BRADLEY

Sometimes you see an image and instantly decide that you like it and want to know how it was created. That was the case with this month's Making Of by Noah Bradley. Noah has done a great job of talking us through his fantastic image. I am sure there are a couple of tips in this one to help any artist!



“Very often the first sketch you do will be the one you pick, but just as often the twenty-second sketch will have something that none of the others did”

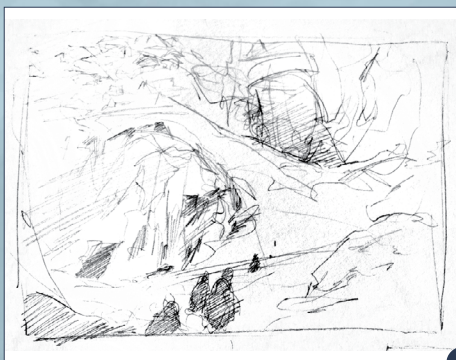
Making Of The Trials of Devotion

Software Used: Photoshop

My images start with thumbnails. There are a few exceptions here and there where I just wing it, but in the main I start with a thumbnail. I do pages and pages of thumbnails. Sometimes they're for a specific piece, sometimes they're just playing around. But I have an entire sketchbook devoted to tiny little thumbnails. In this case I did the thumbnail in pencil. I do most of them in pen, but there's a really comfortable feel that you can get from a pencil that I have a hard time finding in other mediums (**Fig.01**).

There are a few key things when you're working on thumbnails. Firstly keep it loose. A tight thumbnail somewhat removes the purpose of doing a thumbnail in my opinion. I believe thumbnails should be quick explorations of different directions you can take your composition. They are a way to play around with arrangement and orientation without a lot of time being invested. They're meant to be fun.

Another key is to do a lot of them, as many as you can force yourself to do (and then a few more). Very often the first sketch you do will be the one you pick, but just as often the twenty-second sketch will have something that none of the others did. Considering that each thumbnail



01

might take you two or three minutes, it would only take you an hour to crank out a couple of dozen. Before you spend hours upon hours rendering a finished illustration, lay a good groundwork by finding a great composition first.

For this image I sketched out a quick drawing and scanned it in (**Fig.02**). I don't often work with lines because I have a more painterly approach to images. Some people do amazing work starting out with lines, I'd just personally rather dive in and paint some shapes. In this case I was looking to try something new and expand my horizons... and it worked pretty well! So let that be a lesson to all of us (especially me) – don't get too attached to your methods. Explore and try new things.

After I scanned in my line drawing I set it to Multiply on its own layer in Photoshop so I could paint underneath it. You'll note that my marks are broad and extremely general (**Fig.03**). I don't care in the slightest about details, texture,

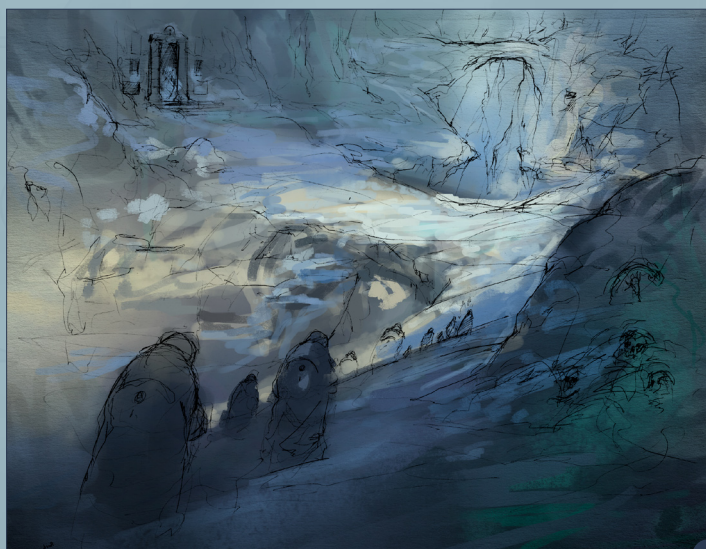


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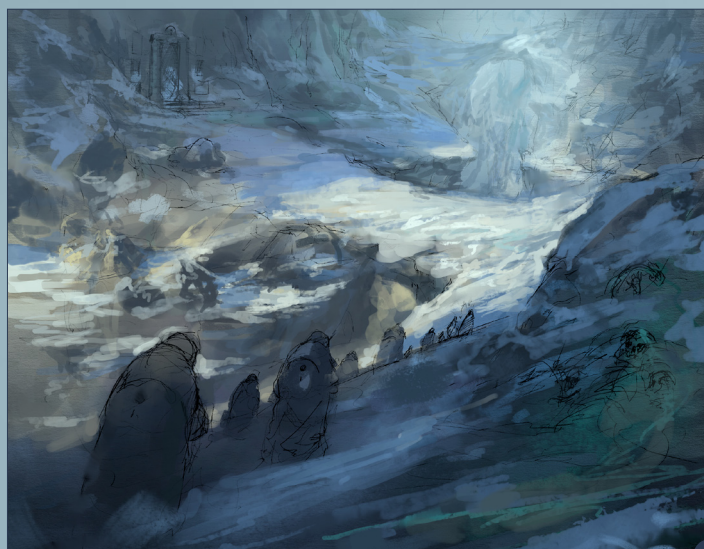
or rendering at this point. All I'm doing is considering the overall image. I even go so far as to force myself to not zoom in. It might not seem like much of a difference, but if you restrict yourself from zooming in you'll find that you simply can't pay attention to details. Give it a shot, you might find you like it.

This stage is about 30 minutes into the piece. Already I've established the general values, colors and lighting. This is the part of the painting where I start to feel a bit more confident and if I squint really hard I can sort of imagine what the end result will look like. That's my goal for every piece I paint. In under an hour I like to have a really good idea of what this image will turn out like. If I can't then I'm probably not focusing enough on the big picture.

This is the first pass of painting on top of the line work (**Fig.04**). You can still see some lines poking through, but now I'm starting to really paint this thing. Where before I was treating



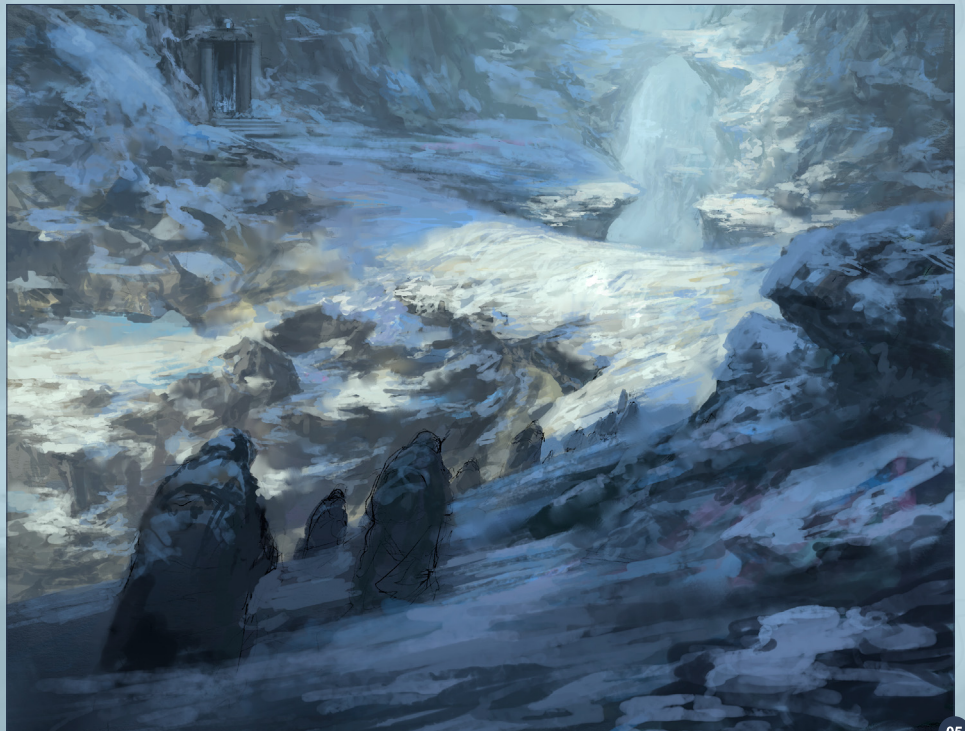
03



04

things very abstractly, here I begin to define the structure of what's going on. Most of this piece is rocks and snow, so I can be pretty free with the size and shape of things, but I still need to keep in mind how light interacts with all of the objects. Which brings me to a good point: lighting. How I light pieces is one of the most enjoyable aspects of paintings for me. There are so many varieties in lighting situations that can be used on any given piece and all of them will give off different moods. Selecting the one that gives you an interesting arrangement of values as well as conveying the correct mood is a challenge in and of itself. I see so many artists who seem content with standard overhead lighting on every single thing they paint. I personally find this incredibly dull. My best advice on how to get better at lighting would be to study master paintings and movies. Check out the work of Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran, and George Inness and you'll begin to see how to make a painting drip with light.

Here is where things start to come together (**Fig.05**). The earlier stages are where I, as the artist, can see where things are going. This stage is where almost anyone can get a good idea of how things will turn out.

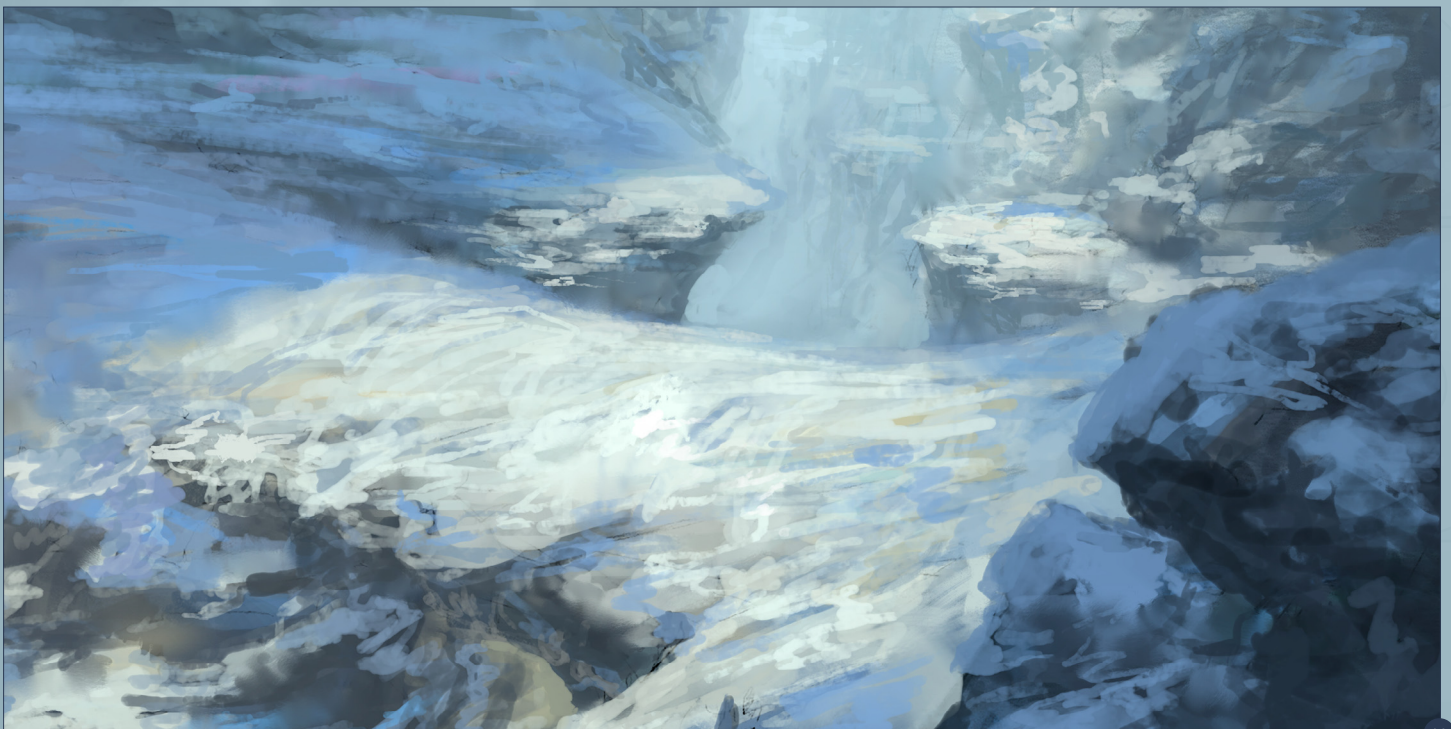


05

As the detail shot shows (**Fig.06**), my marks are still very loose when seen up close. And I'm ok with that. Not everything in a painting needs to be rendered to death. There's nothing wrong with leaving some obvious marks in your piece, so long as it's not distracting.

This is also around the time when I become more concerned with edges. How your different

colors come together can radically change how forms are read, so don't disregard edges – they can be your best friend or your worst enemy. Achieving a nice variety of edges can be extremely trying in digital media. I'm hesitant to recommend it, but I do use the Smudge tool here and there to arrive at my desired effect. Use the Smudge tool with caution, because it's a prevalent beginner's mistake to abuse it to



06

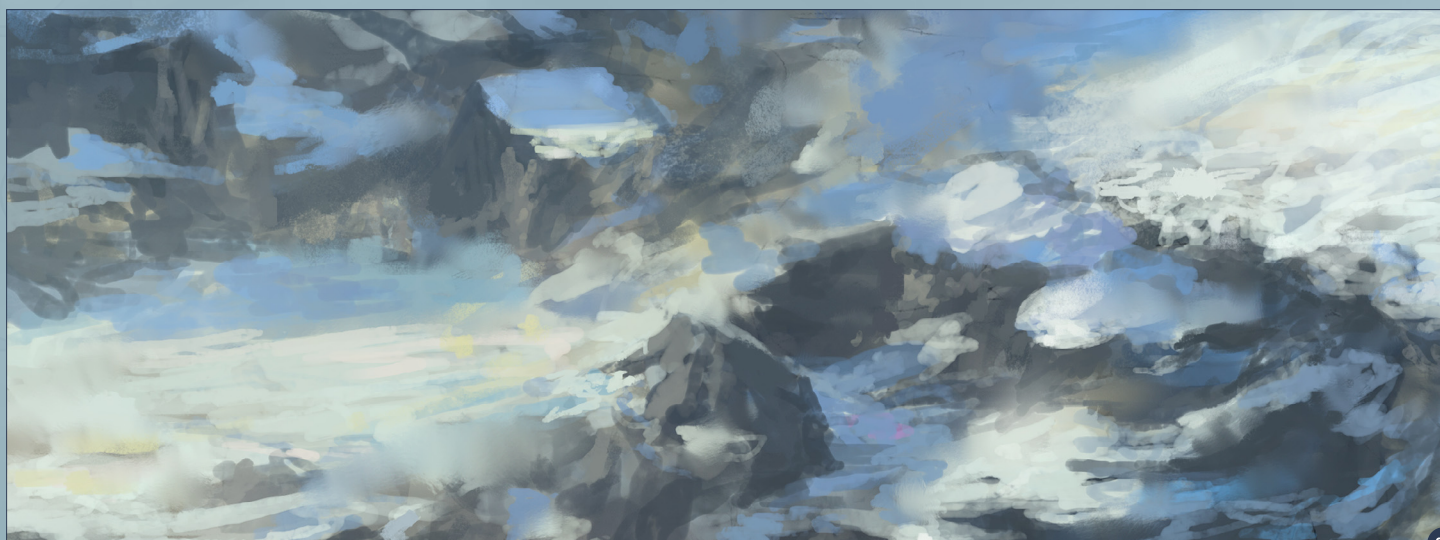


07

death. It's better to have a piece with too many sharp edges that is bold and confident than one with too many soft edges that feels weak and hesitant.

The steps start to look more and more similar as I near completion. The changes are less bold and the marks smaller (**Fig.07**). Around this time I start to truly detail the piece. I zoom in

and start to pick out areas to define and render. Even though things are looking more solid, as the detail shows I'm still leaving things vague in areas (**Fig.08**). Defining everything too



08



thoroughly can, at times, lead to really stagnant
work. Communicate what you want with your
piece and then get out of there!

Noah Bradley

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<http://www.noahbradley.com/>

Or contact him at:

noahbradley@gmail.com

Noah

DIGITAL ART MASTERS VOLUME 5



With the release of 3DTotal's book, *Digital Art Masters: Volume 5*, we have some exclusive chapters for you...

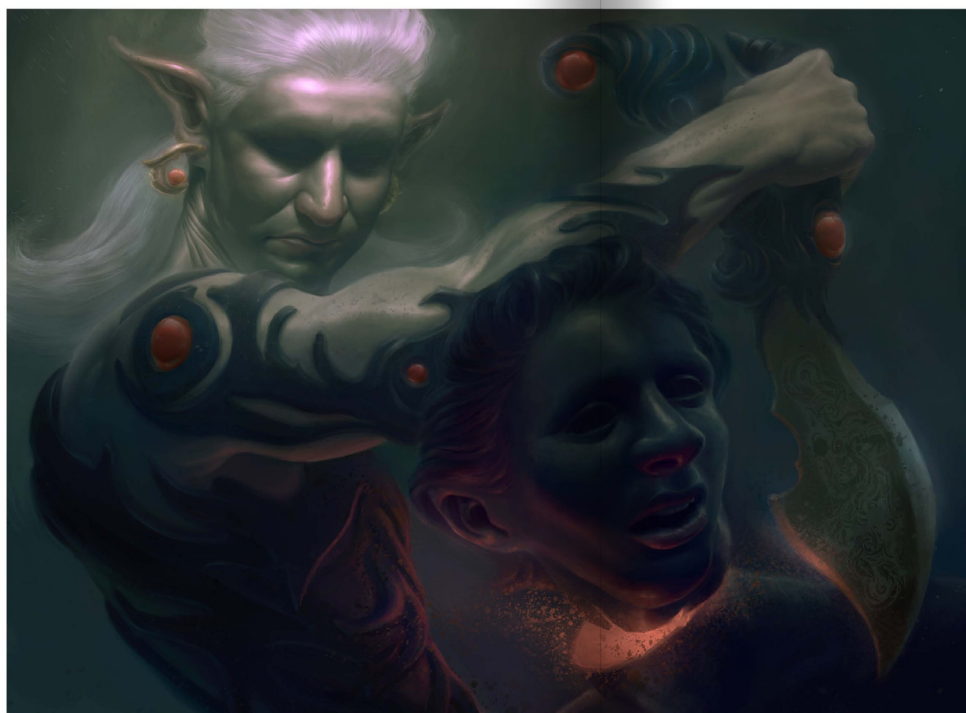
This is more than just an artwork book. Not only does it feature full-colour, full-page images, but each artist has given a detailed description, in their own words, of the creation process behind each piece of published artwork. And they've done it especially for this book!

This month we feature:

"NIZARI"

BY IRVIN RODRIGUEZ





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FANTASY

NIZARI

BY IRVIN RODRIGUEZ

JOB TITLE: Student

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop



INTRODUCTION

Hello I'm Irvin Rodriguez. I am currently studying at the Grand Central Academy of Art in New York City, while working as a freelance illustrator. In this article I will explain the process and working methods used in the making of Nizari. The Nizari were a group of assassins who were a part of the Isma'ili Shia Muslims during the middle ages and who sought out targets based on political and religious reasons. The idea of assassination dates all the way back to the Middle Ages and I wanted to explore the world of the Nizari with a painting that would best illustrate who they were.

I WOULD LIKE TO THINK OF THE DRAWING AS THE SKELETON THAT HOLDS UP THE STRUCTURE. IT IS THE FOUNDATION TO ANY FINISHED PAINTING

THE DRAWING

I would like to think of the drawing as the skeleton that holds up the structure. It is the foundation to any finished painting. I probably spend more than thirty percent of my time in the drawing phase (Fig.01). It is so important for me to resolve any problems with the work, whether it is a compositional or anatomical issue or slight perspective problem. I do not want to be figuring things out as I go as I'm definitely not an artist who paints on a blank canvas. I need to put down some kind of information first.

With the drawing here, I blocked in the two figures and later added the armor and accessories. I wanted to put



Fig.01

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emphasis on the armor and make it seem like it was attached or almost hugging his body. I also gave the dagger a similar design to maintain a consistent style throughout the equipment.

THE GRISAILLE: ESTABLISHING THE VALUES

I usually try to maintain a minimal number of layers when working in Photoshop. The first application of "paint" or pixels is the black and white value study (Fig.02).

I am lost without first establishing the values; it is the first transition from the line drawing to something dimensional. Here is where I set a key for the darkest shadows, brightest highlights and all the values in between. I tried to keep the brush variation to a minimum while working out the values, trying not to get fancy and staying focused on shaping the forms.

GLAZING

Once I was satisfied with the amount of information I had put into the tonal study, I began to introduce some color.

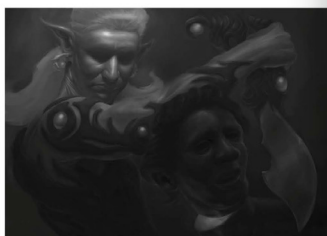
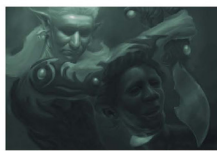


Fig.02

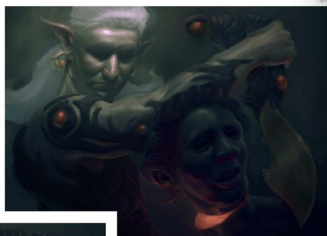


Fig.03

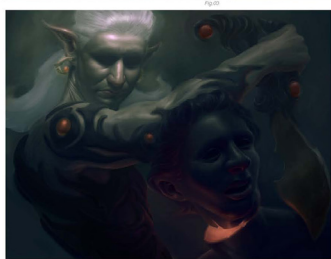


Fig.04

I TRIED TO SEPARATE THE FIGURES FROM THE BACKGROUND, ARMOR, HAIR, AND ANY METALLIC OBJECTS

By doing so I created a Selective Color Adjustment Layer in Photoshop over the value study (Fig.03).

I kept the Adjustment Layers separate from the value study layer so that I could maintain maximum flexibility. Following the Adjustment Layer I created a new layer and activated the Overlay Blend Mode. From here I used a standard circular brush and began glazing subtle color into the painting. I tried to separate the figures from the background, armor, hair, and any metallic objects (Fig.04).

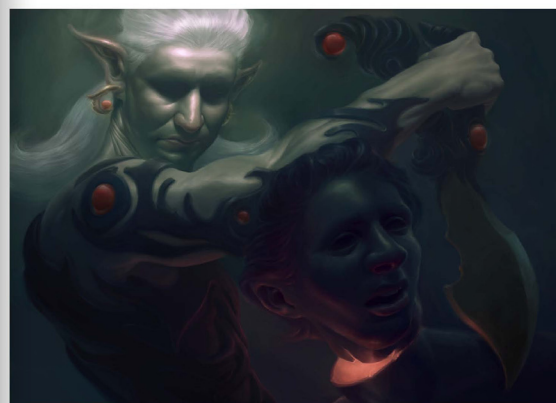


Fig.05

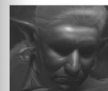


Fig.06



Fig.07



Fig.08

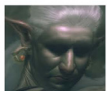


Fig.09



Fig.10

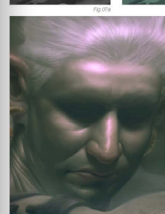


Fig.11

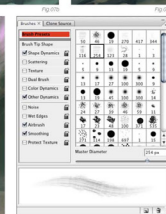


Fig.12

REFINING THE SURFACE

Here is where I began painting in full opaque color, which, to some extent, is like using thick oil paint with no medium. I tackled all the sub forms and began stressing the surface texture. By lightening the transitions in the gradations across the forms, (some more than others) the painting started to come together (Fig.05 - 06).

The focus of this image happened to be the face of the Elf, so I treated this area of the painting with the most delicacy. I sampled colors that I'd painted in during the previous glazing phase and used those colors in a thicker opacity to paint over and refine the previous layers. Any stray brush strokes that were not adding to the overall look of the painting were eliminated, although I tried to

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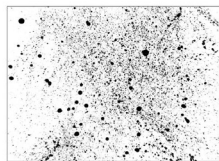
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leave some parts rougher to keep a balance between very tight and loose strokes throughout. If there was any time during the course of the painting that employed the use of custom brushes it was now. The hair required the most attention from the custom brushes, as seen in Fig.07a - g.

“ I FEEL LIKE THE BEST DIGITAL ART IS A MARRIAGE OF BOTH TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA ”

FINISHING TOUCHES

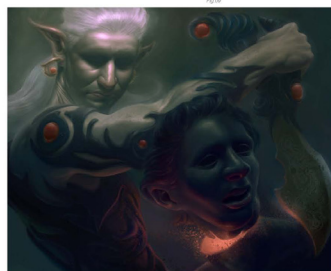
Whenever I am approaching the end of a painting, I sit and stare at the piece for a long time. I will add a few strokes, hit Undo quite a bit and try again until I'm happy. I also use a combination of Adjustment Layers and try rearranging the order in which they sit to see what effects I can achieve.



For this painting I scanned some India ink patterns that I'd painted on bond paper. Afterwards I replaced the color of the black ink in Photoshop and placed the ink work into the painting (Fig.08 - 09). I try to make use of some types of traditional media and fuse them with my digital work. I feel like the best digital art is a marriage of both traditional and digital media (Fig.10).

CONCLUSION

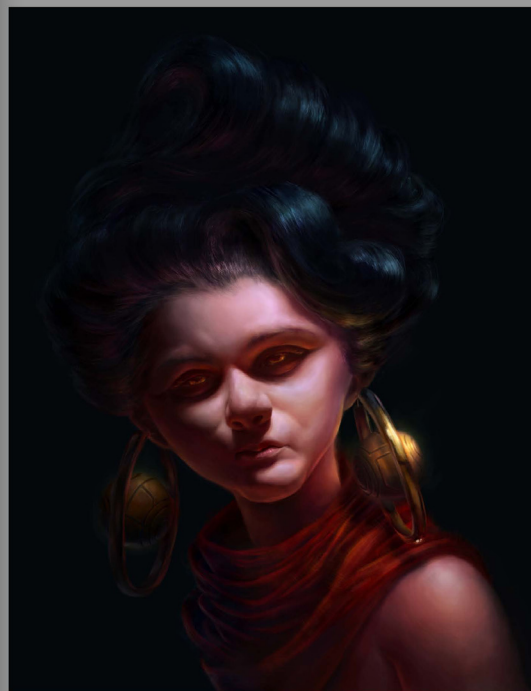
This painting was an excellent experience for me. I learned a great deal from it, especially how to work faster with each painting. I do and gain more and more speed with each one. I was also able to make use of the classical training I am obtaining from my studies at the academy and was very satisfied with the results of this painting. I hope that you can find some use from this walkthrough of Nizari and would like to thank everyone at 3DTOTAL for making this possible.



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ARTIST PORTFOLIO



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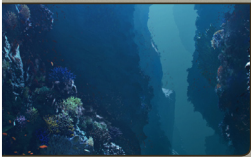


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